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Number 15

FIRST THINGS

A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life

Can Atheists Be Good Citizens?

Richard John Neuhaus

Capitalism: The Continuing Revolution

Peter L. Berger

Man, Woman, and Public Policy

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead & David Blankenhorn

The Economics of Human Freedom

John Paul II

Also: *The Times* Gets Religion • Looking for the Vital Center
The State Casino • Affirmative Firefighting • Presbyterians for GLARF

Reviews and Opinion: Peter J. Leithart • James Nuechterlein
William H. Willimon • David Popenoe • Quentin L. Quade • Alan Jacobs

Featuring

The Public Square

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life



“If we wish to support a Soviet leader whose policies appeal to us, we should look more closely at Boris Yeltsin.”

Caspar Weinberger
Forbes, August 6, 1990

“Remaining President of the U.S.S.R., Gorbachev will have purely nominal and ceremonial functions, not unlike those of the Queen of England.”

Vladimir Kvint
Forbes, September 3, 1990

“Gorbachev is still a prisoner of his past, unable to truly break with the communist orthodoxy of an all-powerful central government.”

Malcolm S. Forbes, Jr.
Forbes, December 24, 1990

“Gorbachev will most likely have to listen to the money-grubbing pleadings of his generals in order to stay in power.”

Peter Fuhrman
Forbes, April 1, 1991

While the world has changed its opinion on Gorbachev, we haven't.

When others saw Gorbachev as a man who could single-handedly bring about democratic changes in the U.S.S.R., Forbes saw him for what he was. A dictator. As early as last year, we predicted that he would use KGB security forces to re-establish the Kremlin's crumbling authority. And that a bloody confrontation would start in the Baltics.

Long before anybody else, Forbes pointed out that continued support for Gorbachev would have disastrous consequences. History is proving us right. Russia is on the verge of economic and political disintegration.

Who should the U.S. support? Now, of course, everyone's jumping on Boris Yeltsin's bandwagon. But

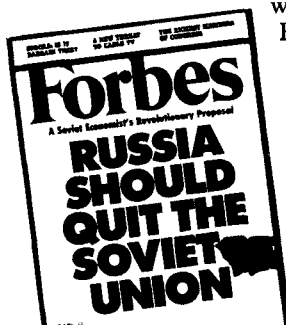
Forbes singled out the Russian maverick as early as last year. When others were still unsure of Yeltsin, Forbes saw him as a serious alternative to communism and harsh repression.

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Editor: *James Nuechterlein*

Managing Editor: *Matthew Berke*

Poetry Editor: *Nathan A. Scott, Jr.*

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FIRST THINGS

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Religion in the Public Square

I found a number of the statements in the symposium "Judaism and American Public Life" (March) thoughtful and provocative. An important distinction, however, was left undrawn or at least inadequately drawn both by the classical separationists and by those whom we might call the conservative "revisionists." I refer to the distinction between issues of church and state on the one hand, and the broader question of religion and society.

"Religion and society" issues pertain to the ways religion ought to function in the world. They include the desirability of the introduction of religiously rooted perspectives in discussions of public policy matters. They relate to the language through which theologically linked views might be included in debates over social ethical issues, and whether the introduction of such views might best be achieved through the transformation of particularist theological language into an idiom of more generally appealing social discourse. The objective of this transformation would not be to conceal the origins of such theologically linked views, but rather to translate them into formulations that might persuade those who do not adhere to theologies which generated them. . . .

"Church and state" issues are far more limited. They relate to the specific modes of relationship between organized religion and the legal and political structures of society. While avowed secularists view the separation of church and state as a protection against the influence of religion on public life, the separationist position does not necessarily imply the further purpose of excluding religion from the public sphere. The assertion that separation has been good for both religion and government remains persuasive even for someone such as myself who is sympathetic to the critics of the "naked public square" and who would urge a greater voice for religion in American public life. . . .

Binary approaches to complex

issues impede rather than nurture communication, and I hope that the FIRST THINGS symposium helped transcend rather than sustain a binary approach to issues of religion and society in the Jewish community. Just as the critics of the naked public square deserve to be heard by the separationists, so, too, do the separationists need to be listened to more carefully by the revisionist proponents of the attenuation of existing patterns of separation. . . .

Finally, in dealing with matters of such weight, it is useful to remember that we are engaged in the American *experiment*. We are reflecting together upon patterns that have evolved in this country over the course of twelve generations, and we are seeking ways to refine these patterns. Our way of dealing with matters of religion and society is the end product of a combination of constitutional foundation, deliberations on the part of Americans throughout our history on the best way to articulate that constitutional vision in the social reality, and a constantly evolving perspective on how best to achieve desirable social ends within that framework. It is best that we pursue whatever adjustments we ultimately deem useful with respect and reverence for what has preceded our efforts. . . .

David M. Gordis
Wilstein Institute of
Jewish Policy Studies
Los Angeles, CA

In his contribution to "Judaism and American Public Life: A Symposium" Nicholas Wolfson speaks of "a nostalgic longing for an *imagined* premodern golden age where religious leaders led the common populace in a private (and public) life of piety centered in the happy nuclear family. If ever there was such a world—and I doubt it—. . ." (emphasis added).

Was there such a world? How about pre-twentieth-century America? Although this world was not "golden," it resembled Nicholas

Wolfson's caricature in so many ways as to demand the adjective "real" not "imagined" and to make it of pressing interest. Alexis de Tocqueville describes this world in *Democracy in America*. . . .

On the subject of a life of piety Tocqueville reports: "On my arrival in the United States the religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention; and the longer I stayed there, the more I perceived the great political consequences resulting from this new state of things."

On the subject of the happy nuclear family and its positive influence on private *and* public life he reports: "There is certainly no country in the world where the tie of marriage is more respected than in America or where conjugal happiness is more highly or worthily appreciated. In Europe almost all the disturbances of society arise from the irregularities of domestic life. . . . While the European endeavors to forget his domestic troubles by agitating society, the American derives from his own home that love of order which he afterwards carries with him into public affairs."

Was this remote and in many ways alien world a theocracy? Definitely not. Tocqueville leaves no doubt that it enjoyed separation of church and state. He says: "I learned with surprise that they [the clergy of the various denominations] filled no public appointments; I did not see one of them in the administration, and they are not even represented in the legislative assemblies. In several states the law excludes them from political life; public opinion excludes them in all."

Did this strong Christian culture restrict political debate? No. In fact Tocqueville suggests that, paradoxically, the opposite was the case. He reports that "I learned from their [the clergy's] discourses that men are not guilty in the eyes of God for any opinions concerning political government which they may profess with sincerity, any more than they are for their mistakes in building a house or in driving a furrow." Tocqueville describes, in other words,

a political climate in which one could breathe, a happy contrast with the political correctness that stifles public debate in America today.

Jocelyn Tomkin
Austin, Texas

Nicholas Wolfson replies:

Jocelyn Tomkin writes of an almost golden age in which blacks were slaves, women lacked the vote and were in economic and legal servitude to men, public life was rife with corruption, Native Americans were slaughtered, constitutional first amendment and church-state separation doctrine was in its infancy, and religious bigotry was so great that a Roman Catholic would not successfully run for the Presidency until the time of Kennedy.

Can Catholics Sing?

Paul Mankowski's review of Thomas Day's *Why Catholics Can't Sing* (April) is just another example of the slightly dyspeptic, very gleeful "See, I told you so!" liturgy-bashing that is quite prevalent these days. I am not connected in any way with liturgy planning or execution, and I sometimes suffer with the rest of the "pew potatoes." However, I *am* old enough to remember pre-Vatican II masses with a memory that does not suffer from nostalgic and wishful reinterpretation.

Fr. Mankowski focuses on a "good taste/bad taste" approach to liturgical criticism. Implicit in his comments is the assumption that "the good old days" represent good taste and that the post-Vatican II ascendancy of "liturgical Roundheads" and "yodeling sadists up in the choir loft" signifies the reverse thereof.

I have never believed that the point of liturgy is "good taste." Rather, it is the People of God at communal prayer. While a more elevated style, i.e., "good taste," may be most appropriate at certain majestically celebratory events, in the main most Catholics find their average Sundays to be (hopefully) periods of prayerful encounter with God and their fellow Christians. Styles that capture the attention and reflective imagination

are most appropriate at these times. Harkening back to the "mystery" and "reverence" of the Tridentine mass is an exercise in forgetfulness. The faithful few assiduously read along in the English translations of the mumbled, incomprehensible twenty-minute "get 'em in and get 'em out" farces that passed for worship services. Those few were *significantly* outnumbered by those who chose to say their rosaries, read their novenas, go to confession, walk the stations of the cross, or, most commonly, settle into a bored daydream, periodically interrupted by some of the most pretentious music in Christendom.

I do not deny that the last twenty-five years have seen some exercises in bad taste, presider and liturgist egoism, saccharine music, poor homilies, and maybe even sinful inconsideration of the confused in the pews. To somehow postulate, however, that those conditions are any worse than what we suffered through in pre-1965 liturgical practice is specious. . . .

Jim McCrea
Piedmont, CA

Paul V. Mankowski replies:

It seems I failed in my review to make clear my thinking (and my digestion). I tried to say that the older liturgical usages were *not* to be reflexively equated with good taste, and that all questions *de gustibus* are of secondary importance anyway. The chief cause of concern is not aesthetic but doctrinal: the extent to which the liturgical clerisy has replaced the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with a fetish of its own manufacture. Avery Dulles tells the story of his entering a church to find a banner bearing the oh-so-sweet bad news: "God is Other People!" He wished he'd had a marking pen in order to add a comma after "other." This, in a nutshell, was the point of my own remarks. Unless we work to restore the jots and tittles that have fallen out of the law (and our banners) the liturgy will continue its transformation from an occasion of worship to one of con-

gregational self-affirmation—in effect, apostasy under anaesthetic.

Refighting the War

I have followed George Weigel's writing for some time and have found it, even when I disagree, insightful and thought-provoking. "The Churches and War in the Gulf" (March), however, I found mainly just provoking. A little righteous anger is one thing, but this uncompromising broadside felt more like a temper tantrum.

More important than the tone is Mr. Weigel's argument. Space allows for only a few observations, mostly limited to the Catholic leadership's role.

First, Mr. Weigel seems predisposed to a harsh judgment of the Catholic bishops. He finds their official statements "inadequate, albeit serious" but then relates to the body of bishops as though the Pax Christi types had carried the day. They did not. And if the prestige press missed the nuances of the bishops' positions, which they are wont to do, perhaps Mr. Weigel could have used some of his considerable exposure to set the record straight.

Second, Mr. Weigel believes that in many respects much of the Catholic (and Protestant) leadership has become "utterly irrelevant" on public moral questions about the ordering of American society and its role in the world. Would a clear sanction of the Gulf war have changed that?

I do not believe the religious leadership has become irrelevant in the way Mr. Weigel suggests, but I do believe its public role has changed. Not primarily because religious leaders have put forth inadequate statements about public moral questions, but because they no longer have the legitimating authority that would make their judgments carry some clout. Large social processes—processes of secularization—have been at work for a long time to marginalize religious activity within the social system, to "differentiate" religion from most areas of social life—politics, the economy, social control, education. Nonreligious legitima-

tions have replaced religious ones and religion has been largely privatized. . . .

Finally, Mr. Weigel writes as though the Gulf crisis contained no ambiguities. It contained many. Leaving aside questions related to judging its justness, the crisis posed some especially sticky problems for Christian leaders: the prospect of a protracted conflict further polarizing Christians in the United States (where unity of moral purpose is already deeply lacking, and, in light of pressing moral and social problems, deeply needed); the profound stake especially the Catholic Church has in Muslim-Christian relations worldwide; the problematical role of U.S. involvement in the Middle East for Catholics and other Christians in that area (note the outspoken criticism of U.S. purposes and designs by some Middle Eastern Catholic bishops); and so on.

All of this is not to say that Mr. Weigel's criticisms have no merit, just to argue against oversimplification and browbeating. Neither serves the civil dialogue that Weigel has spent so much ink promoting.

Joseph E. Davis
Program Director
Domino's Foundation
Ann Arbor, MI

I feel compelled to register a long-delayed critique of the article by George Weigel. Throughout his stinging censure of "the leaders of oldline Protestantism and American Catholicism" for having supposedly abandoned the "Christian Realism" promulgated by Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Ramsey, the writer resorts to pejorative and sometimes utterly derogatory and scornful verbiage to discredit these opponents. . . .

Who has been right? I would claim that the actual unfolding of events during the conflict and in the grim aftermath comprises a clear and indisputable rebuttal of many of the basic contentions advanced by Mr. Weigel. . . .

What is extremely frightening is the Commander-in-Chief's triumphant announcement that our sudden and decisive "victory" in the Gulf

means that "we have finally overcome the Vietnam syndrome." Does this imply that those who had pangs of conscience over the havoc we wreaked in Southeast Asia had untenable moral scruples, while those whose only regret was that we did not "win" the war were correct? Is a *Pax Americana* now to be imposed and enforced around the world? Must we anticipate more interventions with the use of our awesome armed power in various parts of the world?

If just war criteria are applied to what has happened in the Middle East, moral rationales for our massive intervention are far from being convincing. Did we really have a rightful motivation? Were we determined to rescue occupied Kuwait and defeat a barbarous dictator, or was our primary concern economic self-interest and the preservation (or even expansion) of profits based on the control of oil fields by multinational corporations?

What about the "principle of discrimination" which insists upon the restrained prosecution of war with immunity (at least as much as possible) for noncombatants? The ferocity of our air attacks ("bombing Iraq back to the pre-industrial age"), notwithstanding our denials, meant that numerous nonmilitary targets were demolished and many civilians were killed. Are left-wing dissenters always wrong, as Weigel implies? Can Ramsey Clark and his investigators be refuted when they have accumulated extensive photographic evidence of "American atrocities in Iraq"?

What about the "principle of proportionality" which states that war can be undertaken only as the lesser of two evils? Only a few hundred American lives were lost in the combat, but it is estimated that from 100,000 to 200,000 Iraqi soldiers were casualties. Furthermore, how can we justify President Bush's reversal of policy in first encouraging rebellion against Saddam Hussein, and then failing to assist the rebellious segments of the population when they were on the verge of succeeding in overthrowing the vicious tyrant? When we could have used our over-

whelming power for a righteous cause, we declined to do so. We allowed Hussein to slaughter Shiite Muslims and drop bombs on helpless Kurdish refugees. In what demonstrable ways have our declared objectives in fighting this war been achieved? Is there more stability, freedom, and justice in the region now than there was before we moved in with half-a-million troops and executed Operation Desert Storm?

Ralph L. Moellering
Berkeley, CA

History as Empowerment

I question the basic assumption behind Elizabeth Kristol's otherwise helpful survey of "History in the Past Perfect" (April). Kristol is "doubtful whether any historical narrative . . . can in fact empower." If that's true, what is one to make of the empowerment Jews and Christians experience through immersion in the Bible's historical narratives?

The irony is that Kristol's article would not have been worth publishing were her assumption about historical narratives correct. What makes her article so important is precisely that which she seems to deny: the immense power our collective historical memories can (and do) exert on our admittedly limited ability to shape the present and the future. If, as Kristol maintains, the stories being told in the "past perfect" constitute a serious misrepresentation of the past, we should be careful not to underestimate their potential to damage the world in which our children—and their children—will live out their days.

Foster Freed
Hornepayne, Ontario

The True and Only Left?

Did Jean Bethke Elshtain read the same book the rest of us read when reviewing Christopher Lasch's *The True and Only Heaven* (April)? Although a distinctive or dissenting view is rightly welcome, nothing can justify Professor Elshtain's selective presentation of Lasch's dreary anti-capitalist screed as "tough-minded Augustinianism." Does Lasch pro-

vide a "critique of radical chic and other forms of decadent leftism"? Yes. But he also tells us that "capitalism itself promotes an ethic of hedonism and health (sic!)," as well as presenting all the rest of the current eco-multicultural left line.

The True and Only Heaven is merely another of the ever-so-fashionable, more-adversarial-than-thou tracts that Professor Lasch turns out every five years or so (just in time for the Presidential campaigns). There is no need for FIRST THINGS to add its voice to the chorus of huzzahs. Yes, Lasch criticizes the left. But, as F. R. Leavis would say, "Distinctions are called for." FIRST THINGS should stand for certain principles, and ruthlessly expose those who would exploit dissatisfaction with our dominant liberal culture as a means to insinuate their refurbished leftism. . . .

James J. O'Meara
New York, NY

Whose Life Is It?

Richard John Neuhaus argues in "The Death Watch" (The Public Square, March) that with the Nancy Cruzan court decision, "license has been given to kill those the living consider to be no better than dead." By framing the question only in the terms "Whom do we have the right to kill?", he has prejudiced his conclusion and ignored the other important issue in this case: "Whom do we have the right to treat, forcing them to accept our technology in order to prolong biologic function?"

Mr. Neuhaus argues that Nancy Cruzan was not dying. I would argue that she was—that feeding technology was only prolonging certain biological functions in the presence of a mortal wound, prolonging an existence somewhere between life and death, an existence that was possible only because of that particular technology. The biological substrate in her central nervous system that once controlled the physiological process of desiring, obtaining, and swallowing food had been irreversibly destroyed. She died as a foreseen but unintended result of her

decision (via the substituted judgment of family members and friends) not to accept the burden of a treatment that would never benefit her underlying illness. . . .

It is worth asking what sorts of treatment we can mandate for incompetent patients simply to extend certain arbitrary levels of biologic function we define as "life." Do we have the right, for instance, to force a demented end-stage emphysema patient to accept prolonged ventilatory assistance with an endotracheal tube and respirator in order to keep him alive—for how long? . . . Do we have the right to create and maintain this sort of existence simply because we now have the technological means to do so, and his dementia renders him incapable of competence to refuse? To suggest that removal of this technology at the request of family members, once it is determined his lungs and muscles will never support respiration on their own, places us on the "slippery slope" toward becoming Nazis who will execute children with Down's Syndrome misses the mark. Horrors can be created by the blind scientific determination to extend human biologic function as well as by the "license . . . to kill those whom the living consider to be no better than dead."

John A. K. Boyd, M.D.
Chairman, Ethics Committee
Mercy Medical Center
Durango, CO

Not So Nice People?

As an Anglo-Catholic, I read with interest Fr. Kenneth Hunter's article, "When Nice People Do Bad Theology" (April). . . .

The continued manipulation of orthodox seminarians, the blatant denial of parish employment for conservative priests, and the mounting pressure on traditionalist bishops to remain at least silent toward, if not supportive of, the denomination's agenda of zeitgeist religion all indicate that Nice Guys sometimes are not so nice. The only limit to tolerance for mainstream Episcopalians for whom tolerance is the su-

preme virtue comes when they are confronted with the evangelicals of Episcopalians United or the Catholics of the Episcopal Synod of America.

Nice People obviously are not obligated to have nice thoughts about reactionaries who are members of the Society of Lost Causes, the historic Anglican Communion of Donne, Laud, Keble, Pusey, or Eliot.

Fr. M. L. McCauley, Rector
Episcopal Church of the Holy Apostles
Fort Worth, TX

Since 1966, when membership in the Episcopal Church peaked at 3.7 million, the church has lost well over one million members in spite of population growth. This represents an absolute decline of over one-third in a quarter-century in which the U.S. population increased in every year. It is not much of an overstatement to conclude that the Episcopal Church is dying and that the majority of our children will find another church home, not only within our lifetime, but very likely within the next decade or two. If there is to be a decade of evangelism, it must be fundamentally different from the past two decades, or the whole undertaking will be an exercise in futility.

It is very difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Episcopal Church is not only not attracting new members, it is driving away many of those it has. In my opinion, they are leaving not because of religious indifference but because the Episcopal Church has become more of a left-wing political party than a church and because basic religious needs of the church community are now being subordinated to the pursuit of a radical political agenda. New members do not join, in spite of the many strengths of the Anglican tradition, because the Episcopal Church is identified in the public mind with a dogmatic set of leftist domestic and international programs that few can support.

Michael H. Kenyon
Wayland, MA

Sex and Marriage

Philip Turner's essay, "An Anatomy of Sexual Ethics" (April), brought some much-needed clarity to the present confusion over the relationship between sexuality and the institution of marriage. To further Dr. Turner's argument, I would like to propose that the unity of "undertakings and promises" is constitutive of and therefore inseparable from the marital act of sexual union. The basis of both the undertaking and the promises is the sexual union itself. "The two shall become one flesh." The promises are promised and the undertaking begun in the act of sexual intercourse. Thus, the issue is neither whether one engages in sexual union based on previous promises that define an undertaking, nor whether one engages in sexual union based on entry into a mutual undertaking that contains implicit promises. Rather, the issue is to bring publicly to verbal expression the meaning of the promises that are the basic stuff of the undertaking. . . .

In this perspective, there is no such thing as sexual union outside of marriage. Rather, in engaging in sexual union outside of socially acknowledged marriage, one is physically making promises and beginning undertakings apart from a clear intent to follow through. Commonly, we call this lying. To engage in sexual intercourse, whether acknowledged publicly or not, is to promise oneself to undertake a life-long venture with a mate operating socially and economically as "one flesh." We need to call people to be in truth what they are in fact: one flesh.

William Eric Baum
New York, NY

Music and the Spirit

Although I share with Franky Schaeffer ("Art and the Spirit," May) a longing for a vital high culture, I believe his comments on music are based on a shaky reading of the facts.

According to Mr. Schaeffer, little late-twentieth-century "classical" music is performed because the knowledge elite has all but erased the

distinction between art and political propaganda. Were composers and patrons to reclaim a transcendent vision, then we could expect to see people lining up for blocks to hear their music.

Would that it were so simple. Although the audience for modern classical music in the U.S. is undoubtedly a tiny "knowledge" elite, and although it is within the bounds of possibility that none of them has a transcendent vision, to see the relationship between these two "facts" as a simple cause and effect goes too far.

In the first place, the whole idea of "audience" is problematic. The way Schaeffer uses it is relatively modern. Even in the nineteenth century, much music was written to suit the taste of private patrons or, as in the case of chamber music, for the delight of the players.

But even if we accept Schaeffer's use, it is still true that the audience for classical music has nearly always been small and elitist. Sometimes it has been an aristocratic elite, sometimes an ecclesiastical elite, more recently it has been weighted toward those in managerial and professional occupations. Only seldom has the audience reached much lower down the socio-economic scale.

We should also be careful about the issue of rejection of new music. Not only do some new musical works still receive large and appreciative audiences, but we need also remember that a lot of the new music of the past was not given a good initial reception either. Although I have no doubt that, overall, the rejection level is much higher today, it is hardly a unique circumstance in the history of music.

Finally, I find it theologically problematic to accept that people automatically will flock to that which is spiritually significant. My reading of the human condition suggests that we might be more likely to avoid it like the plague. After all, Jesus himself ended up on a cross. . . .

(The Rev.) Stephen Tarr
Port Orchard
United Methodist Church
Port Orchard, WA

Sidney Hook and Religion

Michael Novak (Correspondence, May) says that Sidney Hook "did not ridicule" the writings of "most of his major contemporaries in the field of religious thought." Oh? Here's what Hook writes in his autobiography *Out of Step: An Unquiet Life in the 20th Century*: "I have held the lifelong conviction that faith in the existence of an all-powerful and all-loving god has no more intellectual justification than faith in the existence of a cosmic Santa Claus, and I agree with Marx that the critique of religious abstractions is strategic to the criticism of all reified abstractions."

And this is not, alas, all. He further says that during the late 1930s he defended public education and the ideas of John Dewey against concerted attacks by "religious fundamentalists and sophisticated neo-Thomists" and "the hierarchy of the Catholic Church." . . .

As for Novak's saying that he respects Hook's being determined to think of himself as an unbeliever, this is most puzzling. Unbelief, from a Christian perspective, is a very serious sin. Reread, please, the First Commandment.

John Lofton
Laurel, MD

Secularization and Political Correctness

James Burtchaell is absolutely correct in noting that over the past few decades "secularization is rapidly bleaching the Catholic character of that church's universities and colleges" ("The Decline and Fall of the Christian College [II]," May). The author correctly points out the (unintended, one imagines) secularizing impetus provided by John Tracy Ellis' 1955 essay in which he perceived an alleged "absence of a sense of dedication to an intellectual apostolate" on the part of Catholic America.

Let me suggest that while Ellis' thesis is fundamentally flawed, it has been, following the famous dictum of W. I. Thomas, "defined as real and hence real in its consequences."

David Salvaterra has argued (in *American Catholicism and the Intellectual Life, 1880-1950*), that during the first part of the twentieth century Catholic America most certainly *did* have a "sense of dedication to an intellectual apostolate." While not personally sympathetic to the nature of this enterprise, the progressivist Catholic Salvaterra convincingly demonstrates that the Catholic Church's alternative higher education system mirrored secular developments in bureaucratization and professionalization but provided a distinctive and decisive twist through grounding all study under the intellectual sacred canopy of neo-Thomism and neo-scholasticism, with its God-centered teleological focus. . . .

From the orthodox Christian vantage point, what is needed today in both Protestant and Catholic educational circles is the development and institutionalization of neo-orthodox perspectives that incorporate the best of secular methods and approaches from within distinctive Christian frames of reference.

Joseph A. Varacalli
Nassau Community College
SUNY
Garden City, NY

James Burtchaell's fascinating account of the secularization of higher education is rich in ironies, but his own evidence suggests even greater ones.

In 1869 Charles W. Eliot declared that the goal of education at Harvard would be "an open mind, trained to careful thinking, instructed in the methods of philosophic investigation, acquainted in a general way with the accumulated thought of past generations, and penetrated with humility." This "liberal education" was to replace a more sectarian one, but is now even *attempted* by only a small fraction of college students. Graduates of professional programs and math and science majors, for instance, must settle for training in the latest results of their respective fields. The remaining humanities and social science majors

may have been instructed by teachers who openly reject a "decadent liberalism" for what they see as the greater honesty of intellectual partisanship. Even Western Civilization programs, which were proffered as the secular substitute for a theologically informed curriculum, are under bitter attack.

In 1880, when the *Nation* complained that places like Vanderbilt did not tolerate a respectful discussion of "scientific truth" (as it was then understood), could it have foreseen the present, when universities will not tolerate a respectful discussion of any formulation of "religious truth"? What we see is not the dialectical expansion of thought, but the replacement of one dogmatism with another, proving that universities must espouse *some* faith or other.

When those universities were slipping their denominational moorings, they doubtless thought that they were leaving the churches behind. But the opposite is now happening, as the universities become increasingly irrelevant as guides to life or even thought. University graduates who missed any engagement with existential questions in their course work are now turning elsewhere—even to churches—for such guidance, while the universities sink deeper into their sectarian ideological quarrels. Indeed, in the unlikely event that PC forces take over the universities, they may wonder whether they are worth having.

John Sommerville
Department of History
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL

Not So Obvious

I found Richard John Neuhaus' article "Boys and Girls: The Long Way Back to the Obvious" (The Public Square, May) to be sarcastic, snide, boorish, and lacking in intelligence.

And I was not surprised that such a diatribe was written by a man: it reeked of male outrage at being called to account for odious—mind you,

previously accepted or ignored—behavior. . . .

Neuhaus sarcastically implies that a woman would have to be an idiot to assume that simply entering a man's bedroom meant anything other than an agreement to sex. Many men also think a smile, a dance, or letting the man pay for dinner also indicate "obvious" agreement to sex. . . .

Neuhaus also comments that in the debate over date rape, feminists have abandoned the ideology that women are "every bit as erotically aggressive and insatiable as men." That is patently false.

Women can be as sexually aggressive, erotic, and insatiable as men and they should be allowed to be, if we are going to be egalitarian, healthy, and realistic in our view of sexual behavior. That they can be so, however, does not diminish the date rape discussion. Simply because a woman can enjoy sex and indeed seek it out—even for recreation—does not mean that she must be *required* to do so every time a man wishes.

The author seems to have missed this crucial point: No means no. A woman's no must be respected regardless of whether, on other occasions, she has or does enjoy sex. . . .

Perhaps most astounding, however, is Neuhaus' assertion that unless a young woman can say no to sex because it is morally wrong, she has "no very convincing reason for saying no at all." Convincing for whom? Presumably the man who wishes to have sex with her.

A woman should not have to explain why she refuses sex nor be forced into such unwanted activity if her reasons are not "satisfactory." That Neuhaus would suggest otherwise gives a blanket approval for men to rape.

And I utterly reject his view that if we all waited till marriage to have sex, the issue of rape would go away. Numerous men have been convicted of raping their wives. Yes, their *wives*. Sex is not a given in any relationship in or outside of marriage. It must proceed . . . out of mutual consent *every time it happens*. (And no, it doesn't have to be "in writing" as

Neuhaus caustically asserts.) . . .

Marianne Meed
Toronto, Ontario

Between Rome and Jerusalem

Msgr. Eugene J. Fisher does not like my book, *The Vatican and Zionism: Conflict in the Holy Land, 1895-1925* ("The Vatican and the State of Israel," April), and this is perfectly legitimate. What is less legitimate is to transpose the decisions taken by the Holy See in recent times to the historical period studied by me: the meeting at Castelgandolfo of 1987 has very little to do with the period 1895-1925 to which I expressly limited my research. Nevertheless, I specifically quoted the joint communique of September 1987 at page 94, to acknowledge the Vatican claim to a change. If Msgr. Fisher had taken the pains to read my book thoroughly, he would have found this reference.

He could also have avoided some misquotations. I did not write about "immutable theological positions"; I did not define the Catholic Church as "the chief opponent" of the Zionist movement past and present; I did not write about "unproclaimed" or hidden doctrines of the Church. I stick to historical facts.

May I quote the last paragraph of my book:

I tried to uncover the historical roots of the Vatican's position on Zionism, which hardly changed from the period we considered until the establishment of the State of Israel. In our own time, there have been far-reaching changes in the Middle East: Israel was established; the Church revised its attitude toward the Jews for the better in its declaration of 1965; and there have been official contacts between a number of popes and leaders of Israel. Nonetheless, the Vatican is still a long way from normal relations with Israel. The Vatican does not have diplomatic relations with Israel and continues to be influenced in no small measure by the arguments of

the Arabs. We can only hope that progress toward peace in the Middle East will also lead to normalization of relations between Israel and the Holy See, despite the theological difficulty that the Church has not yet resolved.

Without inventing—as Msgr. Fisher claims—"some esoteric Catholic doctrine" we can see that through the years politics and theology have been strictly interwoven in the Catholic Church's stand on the Jews and the state of Israel. Thus the declaration *Nostra Aetate* of 1965, which partially modified the theology of deicide, was itself watered down because of political pressures by the Arab states. The term "Jewish people" was canceled to avoid the impression that the Jews could still be considered "the people of God," a definition that the Catholic Church attributes to itself only.

For the period examined in my book, there is little doubt that the most dominant representatives of the Holy See, like Cardinal Gasparri, Secretary of State, were poisoned by pure anti-Zionism. More than once Cardinal Gasparri bluntly said that "the danger we most fear is the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine." The most prominent representative of the Roman Catholic Church in Palestine, Msgr. Luigi Barlassina, accused Zionism of lack of religion, of immoralities of all sorts, and of hatred and licentiousness. Pope Benedict XV himself feared that the "Jews might attain a position of preponderance and privilege in Palestine."

I can fully agree with Msgr. Fisher when he writes: "Were [the Holy See's] politics based on 'immutable' theological doctrines, no compromise would be possible." But let us examine the situation today. While maintaining normal diplomatic relations with most of the Arab states, including Iraq and those states in which there is no religious freedom for Catholics, the Holy See did not deem it necessary or expedient to have normal diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. In a five-page declaration by the Holy See of Jan-

uary 25, 1991, a long explanation is given for this simple fact. Whether or not there still remain theological reasons—such as those expressed by Pope Pius X to Herzl in 1904 and by Ernesto Buonaiuti in 1921—is in my eyes totally irrelevant. Let us accept for the sake of argument the thesis so strenuously defended by the Holy See and limit ourselves to the reasons offered in the January statement:

(a) the presence of Israel in the occupied territories and the relations with the Palestinians;

(b) the annexation of the holy town of Jerusalem;

(c) the situation of the Catholic Church in Israel and in the territories administered by it.

May I comment briefly:

(a) During the period between 1948 and 1967, Israel was not occupying the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; nevertheless the Holy See did not have normal diplomatic relations with it.

(b) It is not clear why Israel should accept a "special statute" for "holy" Jerusalem, while according to the new Concordat with Italy, even Rome has no more a holy character; the Israeli Government has proven its special good will by giving back the Notre Dame de France building to the Holy See.

(c) The situation of the Catholic Church, or any Church, in the State of Israel and in the territories is one of complete freedom of worship, unlike that existing in many Arab states with which the Holy See has normal relations. . . .

Finally, as recently as March 1991 Pope John Paul II spoke about one injustice in the Arab-Israeli conflict, and only one: that against the Palestinians. This is not exactly the even-handed and objective stand that one could expect the Holy See to take on this matter. Is it totally unjustified to think that the Church has not yet gotten rid of two thousand years of her "teaching of contempt" against the Jews?

Sergio Minerbi
Jerusalem

Eugene J. Fisher replies:

Sergio Minerbi's point of contention with my comments on his book is difficult to pin down. On the one hand, he states that he never said that the Holy See today has a specifically theological problem with the existence of the State of Israel—which is the point I was attempting to rebut—but limited his study and therefore his conclusions to the period 1895-1925. On the other hand, he himself cites the concluding lines of his book that make precisely the claim he now says he did not make.

Likewise, both Minerbi's book and his letter make great use of the alleged theological animosity toward Zionism of "representatives of the Holy See," which, again, is the point I was attempting to rebut, yet he also says that the matter "is in my eyes entirely irrelevant." Which is it to be? I, after all, did not raise the issue that Minerbi considers irrelevant, but simply responded to it. My own point, to be clear, is not that there are no difficulties, but simply that trying to write off these difficulties as the "teaching of contempt" is to obscure the realities of Vatican policy historically and at present by refusing to look at them squarely.

Minerbi's attempt to move the issue away from the core issues (from the point of view of the Holy See) of the religious rights of the Christian communities of Israel, the actual status of the city of Jerusalem under international law, and the status of the Palestinians is not helpful to an understanding of what is going on in the Church. Let us, I would urge, agree with Minerbi that the theological issue he has raised is irrelevant and move on from there. . . .

This said, a couple of glaring inaccuracies in Minerbi's comments on Catholic doctrine need to be clarified. First, it is not true to say that the Second Vatican Council only "partially modified" the deicide charge. By rejecting explicitly the notion that the Jews as a people can be collectively blamed, either "then" or "now," for Jesus' death, the Council definitively ended any and all discussion of deicide, save to condemn it, in Catholic teaching. There

exists an extensive literature on this topic that Minerbi might want at least to dabble in before hazarding to pronounce judgment on it.

Secondly, the Council did favor biblical terminology in referring to the Jewish people, such as "offspring of Abraham," but it also used common language such as "the Jews" (eight times) and, contra Minerbi, "the chosen people" (once, with reference to the Exodus). The terms "Jewish people" and "people of God" have become, as Minerbi should know if he has followed at all the statements of the Holy See since the Council and of Pope John Paul II, the normal language of Church teaching today. Indeed, the ecumenical guidelines of the Diocese of Rome use the phrase, "the people of God, Jews and Christians." Readers of Minerbi's book, therefore, should be warned, as I tried to do in my brief article, that the author is innocent of in-depth knowledge of Catholic theology or doctrine. He studied the history with which he deals from a purely diplomatic-political point of view and would have had a much better book by sticking to those quite valid perspectives. With this said, it can also be said that in some ways I liked Minerbi's book. It was his presumption, without adequate documentation or reflection, of allegedly malevolent theological motivation on the part of Church leaders that I found to be beyond both Minerbi's evidence and his competence.

With regard to the substance of the matter, there is of course a religious attachment of Christians to Eretz Israel as the Land of Jesus and the site of what are for us the mysteries of salvation. This religious attachment of Christians to the Land is indeed relevant to an understanding of the policy of the Holy See. I happen to believe that there is a quite legitimate "stake" of the Church in the fate not only of the Holy Places but of the Christian communities surrounding them, and that the preservation of these legitimate Church interests has been at the heart of Vatican policy from Herzl's time

to our own. The legitimacy of the Church's stake, it appears to me on reflection, may be what Minerbi is trying to downplay by his accusations, though I hope that is not the case. Certain more extreme groups

in Israel today actively deny the traditional rights of the Christian minority, and it would be disheartening to believe that so distinguished a representative of the State of Israel would wish either intentionally or

unintentionally to give credence to such extremist views. This would indicate a troubling shift in Israeli policy, which, as Minerbi rightly claims, has been quite positive up to this point.

At Home

This morning, early, I wakened
to a knocking at the pane — an apple bough,
fruit-laden, stirred by wind —
and rose to the morning's clear gift.
Outdoors in sunlight, bending
to the kind of labor that gives back
more than it costs, I mowed the grass
and planted a sycamore that with luck
will rise above most things, outlast
all else I've set my hands to do.
Working this day to the nub, my own way,
I hoed the garden of its weeds,
the fragile order of an intention
added to what nature had to offer.
I took it. It was mine, though more
than most have reason to expect.

And now it is evening, late summer again,
light golden on the fields, a dark seam
of cloud above the mountain's spine.
The sky does indeed resemble a dome.
From the hill behind the house
where my walk has brought me, outcroppings
of stone on the slope below glow white
against the pasture's bottomless green,
outcroppings as we are of memory,
the daily bread of insult and affection.
Even here, away from others, an echo
of the evening news persists in mind,
some old tale of bad things that happen
to some who do, most who don't
deserve them. And I give back to the air
that holds its peace an old question:
how to be in good fortune on a rare day
in late summer, just before fall begins.

Eric Trethewey

FIRST THINGS

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1991

That Encyclical

We do not ordinarily publish official church statements. In fact, we never have before. This issue, however, includes a condensed version of John Paul II's ninth encyclical, *Centesimus Annus* ("The Hundredth Year"), issued on the centenary of Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* ("New Things").

Any major statement by the spiritual leader of nearly a billion Christians should be of general interest. *Centesimus* has generated an extraordinary measure of interest. Certainly, its subject could not be more to the point of a journal devoted to religion and public life. The Pope sets forth a theological and moral argument about the proper relationship between the three spheres of the social order—economics, politics, and culture. He does so in a way that marks a significant development in Catholic social teaching, and he offers his argument as a contribution to the thought also of separated Christians and of "all people of good will."

John Paul makes the case for a strong endorsement of democratic capitalism, or, as he prefers, "the free economy." Understandably, his argument has not been welcomed by all. Over the years, many have construed Catholic social doctrine in a socialist mode, while others have contended that Catholic teaching calls for a "third way" between socialism and capitalism. With a few notable exceptions, writers on the subject have represented the Catholic position as being emphatically anti-capitalist. *Centesimus* has shaken the foundations of those conventional wisdoms.

Already in his 1987 encyclical, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* ("The Social Concerns of the Church"), John Paul explicitly disowned the idea that the Church proposes a "third way" between competing economic systems. In that document he also affirmed the importance of allowing space for entrepreneurial initiative. In retrospect, it can be seen that *Sollicitudo* was preparing the way for *Centesimus*, but it must frankly be acknowledged that almost nobody was prepared for the present encyclical's comprehensive affirmation of the market economy. The free market, according to the Pope's argument, is the economic correlate of a Christian understanding of human nature and responsibility.

Those still in thrall to the conventional wisdoms have tried, not surprisingly, to downplay the significance of *Centesimus*. Stubbornly resisting the imperative to reexamine old presuppositions, some have argued, for instance, that there is an unruffled continuity between this encyclical and the 1986 pastoral letter by the U.S. bishops, "Economic Justice for All." Journalists, too, have been somewhat disoriented by the encyclical. Accustomed to reporting what they took to be papal condemnations of capitalism, most of the news stories managed little more than an acknowledgment that *Centesimus* is a more qualified criticism of the market economy. An accurate reading of the document, we believe, is that it strongly affirms capitalism while, with equal urgency, it challenges capitalists to make the free economy work better for those in the world who are marginal to its operations.

It will no doubt take time for Catholics and others to digest the significant development represented by *Centesimus*. Some early commentaries betray a touching desire to seize upon snatches of the document in order to justify continuing in old and familiar patterns of thought. For example, there is a passage in which the Pope calls for a concerted effort in Third World development that will reduce the relative advantage of developed economies. This, we are told, shows that the Pope believes that economic justice requires a massive redistribution of wealth along the lines of a "new international economic order" proposed some years ago by sundry socialists in the United Nations and elsewhere.

Such an interpretation, however, flies in the face of the entire argument of *Centesimus*. If, as John Paul urges, the Third World is more fully included in the free economy's circle of productivity and exchange, the relative advantage of the developed countries will of course decline. In the same way, the American share of the global economy declined relatively with the reconstruction of Germany and Japan after World War II. Such relative decline is to be welcomed, indeed eagerly sought. But readers will judge for themselves whether *Centesimus* offers support for zero-sum economic theories of redistribution or whether, as we

believe, it is an urgent call for an ever more inclusive process of growth in the risks and benefits of the free economy.

Finally, the Pope's clear distinctions between the economic, the political, and the cultural can benefit enormously our public discourse. These three spheres can, of course, only be distinguished, they cannot be separated. But, as the Pope notes, a certain style of liberalism is like Marxism in reducing everything to the economic. In this view, whatever is wrong with the social order is the fault of "the economic system."

In rejecting that view, John Paul emphasizes that there are many parts to the social order, that the most important part is the cultural, and that at the heart of the cultural is the moral and spiritual. The remedy for "consumerism," for instance, is not to have a less free or a less productive economy, for the poor are as susceptible to consumerism as are the rich. The remedy, rather, is in attending anew to the moral order and to the importance of the communities that bear witness to those truths that instruct us in the dignity, duty, and destiny of man. That affirmation of the cultural and of its religious core is, of course, the constituting premise of this journal of religion and public life, and it should help explain why we recommend a careful reading of *Centesimus Annus*.

The State Casino: Doing Wrong to Do Good

Only a few years ago it seemed that religious and other civic leaders could be counted on for vigorous opposition to government promotion of gambling. No longer. State after state has now succumbed to the temptation to pick up "easy money" by exploiting the weaknesses of its citizens, and especially of the poor. It appears that most Americans have resigned themselves to this sordid development as a *fait accompli*. But we can hope that it is not too late for second thoughts and effective efforts for reform.

We're not just talking about places like Atlantic City and Las Vegas. South Dakota, despite a \$5 limit on bets, is in the midst of a multibillion dollar gambling boom sponsored by the state government. The lottery there is deliberately reaching out to the youth market by promoting gambling through video games, the modern equivalent of the pinball machine. West

Virginia is introducing video machines at racetracks, while New York and Connecticut push gambling through off-track betting by telephone and fax machines. Iowa, under the pretense of reviving a colorful aspect of its history, is pushing riverboat gambling on the Mississippi, with the state taking 20 percent of the casino winnings. And so it goes around the country.

What's wrong with people having a little fun by throwing away a few bucks on the delusion that they can beat the odds? After all, a little artificial excitement may relieve the boredom of humdrum lives. A bingo game that raises money for a good cause, gin rummy at a penny a point, or a friendly evening of poker with a \$5 limit—all these seem innocent enough. Certainly the government should not be invading living rooms or social halls to arrest people for pursuing the modest kicks they get from that kind of gambling. Just as certainly, the government should not be engaged in massive campaigns to encourage gambling. And that is what is happening now.

The claim is regularly made that the money is being raised for noble purposes. The purpose usually cited is public education, especially education for poor kids. To hear governors and state legislators tell it, we have almost a moral obligation to gamble. Designating gambling revenue for education, however, is simply another shell game. The state winnings that go to education make it possible to transfer education funds to general operations or deficit reduction. As columnist William Safire has recently observed, "Gambling taxation feeds on itself. We cannot give up the state income from betting, say legislators who feel guilty about pretending that gambling is good, because the states have become dependent on the money. . . . They have become as hooked on gambling as a source of revenue as any compulsive gambler betting the milk money."

In a democracy, the need for popular consent to tax is a powerful check on government growth and irresponsibility. A government that raises money by encouraging and exploiting the weaknesses of its citizens escapes that democratic mechanism of accountability. As important, state-sponsored gambling undercuts the civic virtue upon which democratic governance depends.

Of course, regardless of what governments do, gambling is not going to go away. The gambling habit is deeply entrenched in human history. The knucklebone, the predecessor of dice, was used for gambling in the sixteenth century B.C. Ivory and porcelain dice—some of them loaded—were found in the ruins of Pompeii. Historically, Jews and Christians have not been of one mind on what to do about gambling. But all viewed it with moral opprobrium and condemned in no uncertain terms the gambling habit that leads to addiction, which is precisely what state governments are now systematically encouraging.

Gambling is getting money by means of an artificially created chance, where the gain of the winners is made at the expense of the losers and the gain is secured without rendering any service or other value in exchange. That's one textbook definition. More simply, gambling is an escape from responsibility. When the burdens of the world weigh too heavily upon us, times of escape may be not only innocent but essential. But gambling is a multibillion-dollar industry aimed at encouraging escapism as a way of life. It is no accident that the gambling industry is so closely connected with organized crime, prostitution, graft, extortion, and drugs. Gambling thrives by exploiting people who enter a world where they abandon the reserve and discipline essential to civilized order. That the Gambino brothers move in and take advantage is no surprise. When the state follows suit, government and our common life are demeaned. There are patterns of behavior that the state cannot effectively suppress. That does not mean that the state should actively encourage the undermining of personal and public virtue.

Religious and other institutions of civic leadership must rediscover their nerve in opposing the rush of states to take advantage of "easy money" by replacing democratically approved taxation with revenues that depend upon the encouragement of moral turpitude. In their opposition such leaders will of course run the risk of being portrayed as bluenosed spoilsports. So what? It is a compliment to be insulted by the sleazy interests that have a steep stake in expanding the gambling industry. Most particularly, we should oppose the governmental use of gambling revenues to promote more gambling. The old numbers racket was never permitted mass-market advertising. Arguably, that racket had the merit of encouraging a measure of street-level entrepreneurship. Why should a criminal activity be deemed acceptable when the state does it?

The state cannot enforce virtue, but it can encourage it. Among the most elementary ways to encourage virtue is to refuse to encourage vice. State lotteries and similar devices are numbers rackets that no doubt give some people a little fun, but they are aimed at life's losers who are addicted to the delusion of striking it rich. If states are going to engage in such activities, they should at least be required to display prominently the odds against winning, advertising the number of losers for every winner. Equal time should be made available for anti-gambling messages on television, radio, and billboards.

At a time when respect for government has reached what may be a historic low, it is profoundly discouraging to see states rushing to capitalize on personal and civic corruption. When the state is playing croupier and hustler, talk about the dignity of government invites only derision. It is, sad to say, derision well deserved.

Opinion

Presbyterians for GLARF

Phillip E. Johnson

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has done the sensible thing and rejected the report of its Task Force on Human Sexuality ("Keeping Body and Soul Together: Sexuality, Spirituality, and Social Justice"). But the report continues to merit close examination; one can assume that the ideas behind it will survive the action of the General Assembly.

What most interests me is not the specific recommendations of the report, but the intellectual strategy employed by the Task Force majority to justify its conclusions. The report employs the techniques of postmodernist literary theory. Postmodernism, of course, rejects the idea of absolute or objective truth. Instead of truth, we have only communications in language, or "texts." Thus the most characteristic postmodernist slogan: "There is nothing outside the text." In other words, there is no "intention of the author" or true meaning that we can ascertain. In postmodernist jargon, the author is "decentered," and the reader or interpreter becomes all-important. A text—such as the Bible, or Hamlet, or the United States Constitution—can mean whatever an "interpretive community" wants it to mean. It is no accident that this theory was invented by literary critics (who want to feel as important as the authors they interpret) and eagerly embraced by radical lawyers (who want the Constitution to endorse their political program).

The first step in postmodernist analysis is to establish that the text has no definite meaning. In the case of the Bible, this is done by arguing that some passages are inconsistent with others, that individual passages can be read in various ways, that conditions have changed since biblical times, and so on. It follows that we cannot get guidance out of the Bible itself. The missing meaning must be supplied by the reader/interpreter, who employs a "hermeneutic"—a theory of interpretation that controls the text. The text is then mined for passages that can be interpreted (or twisted) in conformity with the theory. The theory thus cannibalizes the text, and the hermeneutic employs the language of the old faith to justify what may be a new religion altogether.

The report chooses what it calls a justice hermeneutic, but to postmodernists "justice" has no inherent meaning, either. In this context, it is merely a platitudinous term that covers the agenda of Gay Liberation and Radical Feminism (hereafter GLARF).

GLARF correctly identifies the Christian understanding of marriage as the real obstacle to its program of sexual liberation. GLARF is not content with toleration; it demands assurance that its practices (same-sex relationships which by definition are outside of marriage) are approved by religious authority. So marriage has to become just one option among many, and “patriarchal marriage” of the kind described in Ephesians 5 must be condemned altogether. In its place, we get an ethic of mutual fulfillment sanctified with high-sounding words like “justice-love.”

But just what is this “justice-love”? Might it in some circumstances include what traditionalists call adultery, for example? The report does recommend values such as responsibility and fidelity to commitments, and insists that relationships must have a quality of “mutuality” and be “non-exploitative.” The language about fidelity and responsibility can be read to imply disapproval of adultery. On the other hand, a person contemplating adultery can read the report to say that formal marriage status is relatively unimportant, and an extramarital relationship can be one of justice-love if it involves mutual loving fulfillment. In other words, adultery becomes easy to rationalize if that is what one wants to do. And that is what potential adulterers very much do want to do.

It would be extremely naive to put an innocent construction on any of the ambiguous language in the report. The central intellectual premise of post-modernist philosophy is that “ambiguous language” is a redundancy, because language never has an absolute meaning. The reader controls the interpretation. Just as the language of the Bible yields to a justice hermeneutic, and “justice” means GLARF, the language of the report itself is subject to hermeneutical interpretation. The adulterer and the pederast will interpret the text according to a hermeneutic of self-justification, and their interpretation will be as valid as any other.

Postmodernist philosophy is inherently nihilistic and atheistic. Readers should not be misled by the presence of God-talk in the report. To a postmodernist, theological language also has no definite meaning, and probably refers only to subjective states of mind. “God” as the author of our being would be something outside the text. Such things cannot be, because language is all we have. If language is all we have, and its meaning is controlled by a hermeneutic chosen by a political faction, then that faction becomes in effect the author of Scripture. “A justice hermeneutics,” the report says, “focuses on the Jesus story and assumes that whatever communicates genuine love and caring justice bears authority for Christians.” Translation: “Jesus means justice-love, which means GLARF.” What else could Jesus mean? Anything else would be patriarchal and heterosexist. Of course, it is only a “Jesus story” that we are interpreting. A real Jesus would be something outside the text.

PHILLIP E. JOHNSON is a Presbyterian layman and Professor of Law at the University of California, Berkeley.

White Firefighters, Hank Aaron, and Affirmative Action

Richard F. Duncan

Just when the Supreme Court is beginning to reconsider “affirmative action” plans that provide preferences on the basis of race, the Secretary of Education, Lamar Alexander, has decided, at least pending further review, to throw his weight behind “minority” scholarships that discriminatorily exclude non-minority students on the basis of race. Remarkably, even some conservatives are arguing that we should “shut up about white firemen,” form an alliance with the black community, and wage a conservative war on poverty.

Why is it that conservatives so often panic when victory is at hand? I agree we need to fight poverty and I welcome blacks and other minorities on board the bandwagon, but I can’t shut up about white firemen. Nor can I forget about one of the heroes of my youth, Hank Aaron.

When scarce resources like jobs, public works contracts, and educational opportunities are distributed on the basis of race, individual whites are denied justice and blacks as a class are patronized and stigmatized. Two recent lawsuits illustrate these separate problems.

The white firemen who brought suit in *Martin v. Wilks* faced severe discrimination under an “affirmative action” plan. In 1983, the Birmingham fire department elevated five firefighters to lieutenant. Out of ninety-eight firemen who passed the test, the city promoted two whites, who ranked first and second, and then passed over more than seventy others to promote three blacks who scored 80th, 83rd, and 85th.

Just for a minute try to put yourself in the place of the firefighters who finished third, fourth, and fifth on that lieutenant’s test. How many hours did they study to prepare for the test? How many nights and weekends did they sacrifice? How many times did they miss their children’s school plays and sports activities to study fire department manuals and policies? What dreams did they dare to dream about this promotion and what it would mean for their families? No doubt

these were modest dreams, the dreams of Reagan Democrats. The kind of dreams ordinary working folk dream when they anticipate a small move up. Dreams about buying a house, or setting aside a few dollars for college tuition. But they were important to these firefighters, and that should count for something.

How does it feel to be passed over for a promotion that was earned by performance on a fair test open to everyone? How does it feel to go to work every day and report to a superior officer who scored seventy or eighty places below you on the test? You are not about to burn a flag or stage a sit-in at the office of the fire commissioner, but our society's commitment to "equal opportunity" rings hollow in your ears.

Across the country in another lawsuit, the New York City Police Department has established different passing scores on the sergeant's examination for whites, Hispanics, and blacks. The passing score for a white officer is 75; for a Hispanic officer, 69; and for a black officer, 65. The unfairness to white officers from this scheme is apparent. But what is even more perverse is the way it stigmatizes Hispanic and black officers—a score of 70 is treated as a failure for a white officer, but is good enough for Hispanics and blacks. It's like grandpa saying, "Mary really throws a baseball good, for a girl."

Which brings me to Hank Aaron. As former Solicitor General Charles Fried once argued before the Supreme Court in an affirmative action case, Hank Aaron would not be regarded as the home run king of all time "if the fences had been moved in whenever he came to the plate."

Calling double standards "affirmative action" does not fool anyone. Whether in the police department, an elite university, or baseball, lowered standards and expectations for minorities is a blatant badge of inferiority and an affront to their dignity and accomplishments.

Walter Williams, a black economist, refers to this scenario as the "How do you know?" problem. As in "How do you know that he earned his promotion?" An even worse effect of distributing jobs, promotions, and educational opportunities on the basis of race is the inner damage suffered by the beneficiaries of affirmative action, who themselves must question whether their achievements are real or merely the product of some kind of welfare program for middle-class minorities.

Much as I would like to be on the side of political fashion and support affirmative action, I keep running into two obstacles: the voices of those white firefighters whose dreams and legitimate expectations were crushed by good intentions run amok; and Hank Aaron, the home run king of all time.

RICHARD F. DUNCAN is the Sherman S. Welpton, Jr. Professor of Law at the the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

The Irrational and the Limits of Human Reason

Peter J. Leithart

Pick up nearly any university publisher's catalogue these days, and you are likely to find more than a few titles on the history of sex or magic. A recent catalogue of books from the Johns Hopkins University Press includes *Sex and Gender in Historical Perspective*; *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds*; *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary*; and *The History of Syphilis*. Carlo Ginzburg's *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* is backlisted. Sex and magic are academic growth industries.

This trend is more than the expression of the perennial fascination with sex and the occult. In part, it is a by-product of the emphasis on social and cultural history so prominent in historical studies during this century. Pursuit of these subjects is, no doubt, an entirely legitimate scholarly enterprise. It is fascinating to discover, as French historian Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie revealed, that Pierre Clergue, priest of the village of Montaillou in the early fourteenth century, was "the womanizer par excellence of the Clergue family," a "swashbuckler," and an "incorrigible Don Juan"; that the superstitious peasants of the same village clipped and saved the fingernails of the dead; or that one peasant woman collected the blood of her daughter's first menstruation as an aphrodisiac for a future husband.

Keith Thomas' classic *Religion and the Decline of Magic* documents similar medieval superstitions. Some communicants made it a practice not to eat the Host, but instead took it home to use in magical rites. Further blurrings of religion and magic can be seen in the practice of baptizing dogs, cats, sheep, and horses, and in the powers sometimes ascribed to the images and relics of the saints.

Fascination with findings such as these does not betray salacious interest in tabloid historiography. On the contrary, at their best these studies tell us something important about the nature of medieval Western Christendom.

But there is another and disturbing undercurrent in many contemporary studies of magic and sex. Valerie I. J. Flint put it straightforwardly in her recent *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe*: "My own concern, and the concern I hope the present inquiry to excite, is immediately, of course, with unreason and the supernatural in early medieval

Europe; but I hope we might deduce, too, that there were and are places for them elsewhere, even now and even in so apparently 'rational' a society as our own." Ms. Flint is, in short, a historian with an agenda.

Were we in need of further evidence that the Enlightenment in its most rationalistic form has failed, Ms. Flint provides it. That project made headway precisely by tagging the medieval period as the "Dark Ages." Ms. Flint has found, however, that the Dark Ages were not so dark; indeed, she has discovered that many of the medieval Christians so roundly attacked by the *philosophes* were in reality more enlightened than we, more tolerant and open to the "non-rational" in human life—that is, to magic. It is ironic that Ms. Flint, a woman whose very livelihood depends on the critical use of her quite impressive rational powers, should counsel what amounts to their abandonment.

Ironic, but not unexpected. It was inevitable that the modern hope for exhaustive knowledge and consequent control would be revealed as the arrogant illusion that it is. As it has become clear that scientific man cannot explain everything, the faithful have apostatized. This treason of the clergy of scientism was predicted by a number of far-seeing Christian writers. C. S. Lewis pictured a future convergence of technology and magic. The late Francis Schaeffer warned for many years that modern rationalism would collapse into hedonism. Dutch-American theologian Cornelius Van Til argued that secular rationalism is inherently irrational, and many other writers have in the last two decades documented the rising interest in the occult and Satanism.

In this situation—with the standards of modern scholarship in disarray, and faith in reason declining popularly and among intellectuals—the Christian scholar has an opportunity to press the claims of the

biblical worldview with renewed confidence and vigor as the solution to the cul-de-sac of modern thought. The Christian, after all, quite freely admits that the world is full of unexplained phenomena, but the biblical understanding of *mystery* is quite different from the alternative understanding. Operating on atheistic assumptions, what is not rationally explicable to man is not rationally explicable; it must be admitted, then, that there are some things that are inherently unexplainable. From this perspective, the solution to an over-emphasis on rationality is to balance it with irrationality: add a Dionysian weekend to our Apollonian weekdays.

The biblical worldview, by contrast, posits that everything is rationally explicable, but avoids the dead end of secular rationalism by distinguishing between the knowledge of God and the knowledge of man. Every fact of history or nature is comprehensively known by *God*; nothing is *ultimately* unknowable or inexplicable. Because man is a creature, however, his knowledge is inherently limited, and he is called to accept these limits; man's attempt to comprehend everything is not only doomed, but idolatrous. On the other hand, because man is a creature made after God's own image, he is capable of knowing.

Thus, mystery = God's knowledge minus man's knowledge. This biblical formula both affirms the absolute reasonableness of reality and admits the limitations of human reason. It is a formula whose implications need to be drawn out in response both to academic rationalists and the growing number of academic irrationalists.

PETER J. LEITHART is Pastor of Reformed Heritage Presbyterian Church in Alabaster, Alabama.

Can Atheists Be Good Citizens?

Richard John Neuhaus

The question is asked whether atheists can be good citizens. I do not want to keep you in suspense. I would very much like to answer the question in the affirmative. It seems the decent and tolerant thing to do. But before we can answer the question posed, we should first determine what is meant by atheism. And, second, we must inquire more closely into what is required of a good citizen.

Consider our late friend Sidney Hook. Can anyone deny that he was a very good citizen indeed? During the long contest with totalitarianism he was a much better citizen than many believers, including numerous church leaders, who urged that the moral imperative was to split the difference between the evil empire and human fitness for freedom.

On the other hand, Sidney Hook was not really an atheist. He is more accurately described as a philosophical agnostic, one who says that the evidence is not sufficient to compel us either to deny or affirm the reality of God. Sidney was often asked what he would say when he died and God asked him why he did not believe. His standard answer was that he would say, "Lord, you didn't supply enough evidence." Some of us are rather confident that Sidney now has all the evidence that he wanted, and we dare to hope that the learning experience is not too painful for him. Unlike many atheists of our time, Sidney Hook believed in reason and evidence that yield what he did not hesitate to call truth. They may have been false gods, but he was not without his gods.

There is atheism and then there is atheism. The Greek *a-theos* meant one who is "without God." It had less to do with whether one believed in God than with whether one believed in the gods of the city or the empire. For his perceived disbelief in the gods, Socrates was charged with atheism. The early Christians were charged with atheism for their insistence that there is no god other than the God whom Jesus

called Father. In the eyes of the ancients, to be *a-theos* was to be outside the civilizational circle of the *civitas*. To be an atheist was to be subversive. The atheist was a security risk, if not a traitor. Christians were thought to be atheists precisely because they professed the God who judges and debunks the false gods of the community. In the classical world, then, the answer to our question was decisively in the negative: No, an atheist could not be a good citizen. But those whom they called atheists then we do not call atheists today.

Those whom we call atheists in the modern period believe that they are denying what earlier "atheists," such as the Christians, affirmed. That is to say, they deny the reality of what they understand believing Jews and Christians to mean by God. This form of atheism is a post-Enlightenment and largely nineteenth-century phenomenon. It developed a vocabulary—first of course among intellectuals but then becoming culturally pervasive—that was strongly prejudiced against believers. Note the very use of the term "believer" to describe a person who is persuaded of the reality of God. The alternative to being a believer, of course, is to be a knower. Similarly, a curious usage developed with respect to the categories of faith and reason, the subjective and the objective, and, in the realm of morals, a sharp distinction between fact and value. Belief, faith, subjectivity, values—these were the soft and dubious words relevant to affirming God. Knowledge, reason, objectivity, fact—these were the hard and certain words relevant to denying God. This tendentious vocabulary of modern unbelief is still very much with us today.

Necessarily following from such distortive distinctions are common assumptions about the public and the private. One recalls A. N. Whitehead's axiom that religion is what a man does with his solitude. Even one so religiously musical as William James could write, "Religion . . . shall mean for us the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude." (*The Varieties of Religious Experience*, Lecture 2) In this construal of matters, we witness a

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS is Editor-in-Chief of *FIRST THINGS*. This essay originated as a Bradley Lecture at the American Enterprise Institute.

radical departure from the public nature of religion, whether that religion has to do with the ancient gods of the city or with the biblical Lord who rules over the nations. The gods of the city and the God of the Bible are emphatically public. The confinement of the question of God or the gods to the private sphere constitutes what might be described as political atheism. Many today who are believers in private have been persuaded, or intimidated, into accepting political atheism.

Political atheism is a subspecies of practical or methodological atheism. Practical or methodological atheism is, quite simply, the assumption that we can get along with the business at hand without addressing the question of God one way or another. Here the classic anecdote is the response of the Marquis de Laplace to Napoleon Bonaparte. You will recall that when Napoleon observed that Laplace had written a huge book on the system of the universe without mentioning the Author of the universe, Laplace replied, "Sire, I have no need of that hypothesis." When God has become a hypothesis we have traveled a very long way from both the gods of the ancient city and the God of the Bible. Yet that distance was necessary to the emergence of what the modern world has called atheism.

In his remarkable work, *At the Origins of Modern Atheism*, Michael Buckley persuasively argues that the god denied by many moderns is a strange god created by the attempts of misguided religionists to demonstrate that god could be proven or known on philosophical grounds alone.

The extraordinary note about this emergence of the denial of the Christian god which Nietzsche celebrated is that Christianity as such, more specifically the person and teaching of Jesus or the experience and history of the Christian Church, did not enter the discussion. The absence of any consideration of Christology is so pervasive throughout serious discussion that it becomes taken for granted, yet it is so stunningly curious that it raises a fundamental issue of the modes of thought: How did the issue of Christianity vs. atheism become purely philosophical? To paraphrase Tertullian: How was it that the only arms to defend the temple were to be found in the Stoa?

As Nietzsche's god had nothing to do with Christology, so, needless to say, the god that he declared dead had nothing to do with Sinai, election, covenant, or messianic promise.

In his notebook, after his death, was found Pascal's famous assertion of trust in "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, not of philosophers and scholars." Modern atheism is the product not so much of anti-religion as of religion's replacement of

the God of Abraham with the god of the philosophers, and of the philosophers' consequent rejection of that *ersatz* god. Descartes determined that he would accept as true nothing that could be reasonably doubted, and Christians set about to prove that the existence of God could not be reasonably doubted. Thus did the defenders of religion set faith against the doubt that is integral to the life of faith.

The very phrase, "the existence of God," gave away the game, as though God were one existent among other existents, one entity among other entities, one actor among other actors, whose actions must conform to standards that we have determined in advance are appropriate to being God. The transcendent, the ineffable, the totally other, the God who acts in history was tamed and domesticated in order to meet the philosophers' job description for the post of God. Not surprisingly, the philosophers determined that the candidates recommended by the friends of religion did not qualify for the post.

The American part of this story is well told by historian James Turner (*Without God, Without Creed: The Origins of Unbelief in America*). "The natural parents of modern unbelief," Turner writes, "turn out to have been the guardians of belief." Many thinking people came at last "to realize that it was religion, not science or social change, that gave birth to unbelief. Having made God more and more like man—intellectually, morally, emotionally—the shapers of religion made it feasible to abandon God, to believe simply in man." Turner's judgment is relentless: "In trying to adapt their religious beliefs to socioeconomic change, to new moral challenges, to novel problems of knowledge, to the tightening standards of science, the defenders of God slowly strangled Him. If anyone is to be arraigned for deicide, it is not Charles Darwin but his adversary Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, not the godless Robert Ingersoll but the godly Beecher family."

H. L. Mencken observed that the great achievement of liberal Protestantism was to make God boring. That is unfair, of course, as Mencken was almost always unfair, but it is not untouched by truth. The god that was trimmed, accommodated, and retooled in order to be deemed respectable by the "modern mind" was increasingly uninteresting, because unnecessary. Dietrich Bonhoeffer described that god as a "god of the gaps," invoked to fill in those pieces of reality that human knowledge and control had not yet mastered. H. Richard Niebuhr's well known and withering depiction of the gospel of liberal Christianity is very much to the point: "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a Cross." Absent our sin and divine wrath, judgment, and redemption, it is not surprising that people came to dismiss the idea of God not because it is implausible but because it is superfluous, and, yes, boring.

It would no doubt be satisfying for Christian believers—and for Jews who identify themselves not by the accidents of Jewishness but by the truth of Judaism—to conclude that the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus has not been touched by the critiques of atheism. However, while it is true that the god denied by many atheists is not the God of the Bible affirmed by Christians and Jews, there are forms of atheism that do intend to preclude such affirmation, and certainly to preclude such affirmation in public. There is, for example, the more determined materialist who asserts that there simply is nothing and can be nothing outside a closed system of matter. This was the position of the late and unlamented “dialectical materialism” of Communism. It is the position of some scientists today, especially those in the biological sciences who are wedded to evolution as a belief system. (Physicists, as it turns out, are increasingly open to the metaphysical.)

Perhaps more commonly, one encounters varieties of logical positivism that hold that since assertions about God are not empirically verifiable—or, for that matter, falsifiable—they are simply meaningless. In a similar vein, analytical philosophers would instruct us that “God talk” is, quite precisely, non-sense. This is not atheism in the sense to which we have become accustomed, since it claims that denying God is as much nonsense as affirming God. It is atheism, however, in the original sense of a-theos, of being without God. Then there is the much more radical position that denies not only the possibility of truth claims about God but the possibility of claims to truth at all—at least as “truth” has usually been understood in our history. Perhaps today’s most prominent proponent of this argument in America is Richard Rorty. This is not the atheism that pits reason against our knowledge of God; this is the atheism of unreason.

Rorty is sometimes portrayed, and portrays himself, as something of an eccentric gadfly. In fact, along with Derrida, Foucault, and other Heideggerian epigones of Nietzsche, Rorty is the guru of an academic establishment of increasing influence in our intellectual culture. Here we encounter the apostles of a relativism that denies it is relativism because it denies that there is any alternative to relativism, and therefore the term relativism is “meaningless.” They are radically anti-foundationalist. That is to say, they contend that there are no conclusive arguments underlying our assertions, except the conclusive argument that there are no conclusive arguments. They reject any “correspondence theory” of truth. There is no coherent connection between what we think and say and the reality “out there.” Truth is what the relevant community of discourse agrees to say is true.

The goal, in this way of thinking, is self-actualization, indeed self-creation. The successful life is the life lived as a *novum*, an autobiography that has escaped the “used vocabularies” of the past. This argument has its academic strongholds in literary

criticism and sectors of philosophy, but it undergirds assumptions that are increasingly widespread in our intellectual culture. If personal and group self-actualization is the end, arguments claiming to deal with truth are but disguised stratagems for the exercise of will and the quest for power. Whether the issue is gender, sexual orientation, or race, we are told that the purpose is to change the ideational “power structure” presently controlled by oppressors who disingenuously try to protect the status quo by appeals to objective truth and intersubjective reason.

The only truth that matters is the truth that is instrumental to self-actualization. Thus truth is in service to “identity.” If, for instance, one has the temerity to object that there is no evidence that Africans discovered the Americas before Columbus, he is promptly informed that he is the tool of hegemonic Eurocentrism. In such a view, the “social construction of reality” (to use the language of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann) takes on ominous new dimensions as it is asserted that all of reality, without remainder, is constructed to serve the will to power and self-actualization. Brevity requires that I describe this approach with broad strokes, but, alas, the description is no caricature.

But are people who embrace this view atheists? They brush aside the question as “not serious,” for the theism upon which atheism depends is, in this view, not serious. As with relativism and irrationality, so also with atheism—the words only make sense in relation to the opposites from which they are derived. Of course privately, or for purposes of a particular community, any words might be deemed useful in creating the self. One might even find it meaningful to speak about “Nature and Nature’s God.” People can be permitted to talk that way, so long as they understand that such talk has no public purchase. Rorty’s “liberal ironist” can employ any vocabulary, no matter how fantastical, so long as he does not insist that it is true in a way that makes a claim upon others, and so long as he does not act on that vocabulary in a manner that limits the freedom of others to construct their own realities.

There is indeed irony in the fact that some who think of themselves as theists eagerly embrace deconstructionism’s operative atheism. Today’s cultural scene is awash in what are called “new spiritualities.” A recent anthology of “America’s new spiritual voices” includes contributions promoting witchcraft, ecological mysticism, devotion to sundry gods and goddesses, and something that presents itself as Zen psychoanalysis. All are deemed to be usable vocabularies for the creation of the self. The book is recommended by a Roman Catholic theologian who writes that it “turns us away from the ‘truths’ outside ourselves that lead to debate and division, and turns us toward the Inner Truth that is beyond debate.” But theism—whether in relation to the gods of the *civitas*

theism—whether in relation to the gods of the *civitas* or the God of Abraham—is devotion to that which is external to ourselves. In that light, it is evident that many of the burgeoning “spiritualities” in contemporary culture are richly religionized forms of atheism.

There is additional irony. Beyond pop-spiritualities and Rortian nihilism, a serious argument is being made today against a version of rationality upon which Enlightenment atheism was premised. Here one thinks preeminently of Alasdair MacIntyre, and especially of his most recent work, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*. MacIntyre effectively polemicizes against a construal of rationality that understands itself to be universal, disinterested, autonomous, and transcending tradition. Our situation, he contends, is one of traditions of rationality in conflict. MacIntyre’s favored tradition is Thomism’s synthesis of Aristotle and Augustine. If I read him correctly, MacIntyre is prepared to join forces with the Rortians in debunking the hegemonic pretensions of the autonomous and foundational reason that has so long dominated our elite intellectual culture. After the great debunking, all the cognitive cards will have to be put on the table and we can then have at it. Presumably, the tradition that can provide the best account of reality will win out.

If that is MacIntyre’s proposal, it strikes me as a very dangerous game. True, in exposing the fallacious value-neutrality of autonomous and traditionless reason, the academy is opened to the arguments of eminently reasonable theism. But, in the resulting free-for-all, it is opened to much else as well. It is made vulnerable to the Nietzschean will to power that sets the rules, and those rules are designed to preclude the return of the gods or God in a manner that claims public allegiance. For one tradition of reason (e.g., Thomism) to form a coalition, even a temporary coalition, with unreason in order to undo another tradition of reason (e.g., the autonomous “way of the mind”) is a perilous tactic.

And yet something like this may be the future of our intellectual culture. In our universities, Christians, Jews, and, increasingly, Muslims will be free to contend for their truths. Just as lesbians, Marxists, Nietzscheans, and devotees of The Great Earth Goddess are free to contend for theirs. It is a matter of equal opportunity propaganda. But—and again there is delicious irony—the old methodological atheism and value-neutrality, against which the revolution was launched, may nonetheless prevail.

In other words, every party will be permitted to contend for their truths so long as they acknowledge that they are *their* truths, and not *the* truth. Each will be permitted to propagandize, each will *have* to propagandize if it is to hold its own, because it is acknowledged that there is no common ground for the alternative to propaganda, which is reasonable persuasion. Of course history, including the history of ideas, is full of surprises. But there is, I believe,

reason to fear that theism, when it plays by the rules of the atheism of unreason, will be corrupted and eviscerated. The method becomes the message. Contemporary Christian theology already provides all too many instances of the peddling of truths that are in service to truths other than the truth of God.

II

We have touched briefly, then, on the many faces of atheism—of living and thinking a-theos, without God or the gods. There is the atheism of the early Christians, who posited God against the gods. There is the atheism of Enlightenment rationalists who, committed to undoubtable certainty, rejected the god whom religionists designed to fit that criterion. There is the practical atheism of Laplace, who had no need of “that hypothesis” in order to get on with what he had to do. There is the weary atheism of those who grew bored with liberalism’s god created in the image and likeness of good liberals. There is the more thorough atheism of Nietzschean relativism that dare not speak its name, that cannot speak its name, lest in doing so it implicitly acknowledge that there is an alternative to relativism. And, finally, there is the atheism of putative theists who peddle religious truths that are true for you, if you find it useful to believe them true.

Can these atheists be good citizens? It depends, I suppose, on what is meant by good citizenship. We may safely assume that the great majority of these people abide by the laws, pay their taxes, and may even be congenial and helpful neighbors. But can a person who does not acknowledge that he is accountable to a truth higher than the self, external to the self, really be trusted? Locke and Rousseau, among many other worthies, thought not. However confused their theology, they were sure that the social contract was based upon nature, upon the way the world really is. Rousseau’s “civil religion” was apparently itself a social construct, but Locke was convinced that the fear of a higher judgment, even an eternal judgment, was essential to citizenship.

It follows that an atheist could not be trusted to be a good citizen, and therefore could not be a citizen at all. Locke is rightly celebrated as a champion of religious toleration, but not of irreligion. “Those are not at all to be tolerated who deny the being of a God,” he writes in *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. “Promises, covenants, and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an atheist. The taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all.” The taking away of God dissolves all. Every text becomes pretext, every interpretation misinterpretation, and every oath a deceit.

James Madison in his famed *Memorial and Remonstrance* of 1785 wrote to similar effect. It is always being forgotten that for Madison and the other

founders religious freedom is an unalienable right that is premised upon unalienable duty. "It is the duty of every man to render to the Creator such homage and such only as he believes to be acceptable to him. This duty is precedent, both in order of time and in degree of obligation, to the claims of Civil Society." Then follows a passage that could hardly be more pertinent to the question that prompts our present reflection: "Before any man can be considered as a member of Civil Society, he must be considered as a subject of the Governour of the Universe: And if a member of Civil Society, who enters into any subordinate Association, must always do it with a reservation of his duty to the General Authority; much more must every man who becomes a member of any particular Civil Society, do it with a saving of his allegiance to the Universal Sovereign."

State constitutions could and did exclude atheists from public office. The federal Constitution, in Article VI, would simply impose no religious test. In reaction to the extreme secularist bias of much historical scholarship, some writers in recent years have attempted to portray the founders as Bible-believing, orthodox, even born-again evangelical Christians. That is much too much. It is well worth recalling, however, how much they had in common with respect to religious and philosophical beliefs. While a few were sympathetic to milder versions of Deism and some were rigorous Calvinists in the Puritan tradition, almost all assumed a clearly Christian, and clearly Protestant, construal of reality. In the language of contemporary discourse, the founders were "moral realists." This is amply demonstrated from many sources, not least the Declaration and the Constitution, and especially the preamble of the latter. The "good" was for the founders a reality not of their own fabrication, nor was it merely the "conventionalism" of received moral tradition.

The founders' notion of the social contract was not a truncated and mechanistic contrivance of calculated self-interest. Their understanding was more in the nature of a compact, premised upon a sense of covenantal purpose guiding this *novus ordo seclorum*. That understanding of a covenant encompassing the contract was, in a time of supreme testing, brought to full and magisterial articulation by Abraham Lincoln. The Constitution represented not a deal struck but a nation "so conceived and so dedicated."

In such a nation, an atheist can be a citizen, but he cannot be a good citizen. A good citizen does more than abide by the laws. A good citizen is able to give an account, a morally compelling account, of the regime of which he is part. He is able to justify its defense against its enemies, and to convincingly recommend its virtues to citizens of the next generation so that they, in turn, can transmit the regime to citizens yet unborn. This regime of liberal democracy, of republican self-governance, is not self-evidently good and just. An account must be given. Reasons must

be given. They must be reasons that draw authority from that which is higher than the self, from that which is external to the self, from that to which the self is ultimately obliged.

An older form of atheism pitted reason against the knowledge of God. The newer atheism is the atheism of unreason. It is much the more dangerous because the more insidious. Fortunately, the overwhelming majority of Americans—and, I believe, the majority of our intellectual elites, if put to the test—are not atheists of any of the varieties we have discussed. They believe that there are good reasons for this ordering of the *civitas*, reasons that have public purchase, reasons that go beyond contingent convenience, reasons that entail what is just, the laws of nature, and maybe even the will of God.

The final irony, of course, is that those who believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus turn out to be the best citizens. Those who were once called atheists are now the most reliable defenders not of the gods but of the good reasons for this regime of ordered liberty. Such people are the best citizens not despite but *because* their loyalty to the *civitas* is qualified by a higher loyalty. Among the best of the good reasons they give in justifying this regime is that it is a regime that makes a sharply limited claim upon the loyalty of its citizens. The ultimate allegiance of the faithful is not to the regime or to its constituting texts, but to the City of God and the sacred texts that guide our path toward that end for which we were created. They are dual citizens, so to speak, in a regime that, as Madison and others well understood, was designed for such duality. When the regime forgets itself and reestablishes the gods of the *civitas*, even if it be in the name of liberal democracy, the followers of the God of Abraham have no choice but to invite the opprobrium of once again being "atheists."

I am well aware that there are those who will agree with the gravamen of this argument but for quite different reasons. They do not themselves believe, but they recognize the importance of religion as a "useful lie" essential to securing this kind of public order. It is true, and it is sad. It is sad because they do not believe, and it is sadder because they are prepared to use, and thereby abuse, the name of the God whom they do not honor.

But of course they are right about religion and this public order. It is an order that was not conceived and dedicated by atheists, and cannot today be conceived and dedicated anew by atheists. In times of testing—and every time is a time of testing for this American experiment in ordered liberty—a morally convincing account must be given. You may well ask, Convincing to whom? One obvious answer in a democracy, although not the only answer, is this: convincing to a majority of their fellow citizens. Giving such an account is required of good citizens. And that is why, I reluctantly conclude, atheists cannot be good citizens. ☐

Capitalism: The Continuing Revolution

Peter L. Berger

When I wrote *The Capitalist Revolution* five years ago, the word *revolution* was, of course, intended to denote the fundamental changes, the radical transformation, that capitalism brings about in a society. It did not imply an overthrow of existing regimes and, alas, did not constitute a prediction of the cataclysmic events that have shaken the socialist world since the spring of 1989. (I can console myself with the thought that hardly anyone predicted these events.) All the same, much of the international scene today is dominated by what can only be described as a "capitalist revolution" of massive dimensions. It seems plausible, in view of this, to ask whether these developments support or weaken any of the propositions around which the book was constructed. But first I would like to make a few observations about the current capitalist upsurge and the triumphalist mood it has engendered among advocates of capitalism.

I

The most spectacular manifestations of this turn toward capitalism have, of course, occurred in the socialist societies of Eastern Europe and, to an extent, within the Soviet Union itself. The speed with which the new democratic or democratizing regimes in Eastern Europe have begun to dismantle the structures

of socialism and to move toward a market economy has been astonishing, as has been the pro-market-economy rhetoric that has accompanied this revolution. Poland, under its Solidarity-dominated government, has opted for the most radical form of the transition to capitalism, rejecting a gradualistic process in favor of a cold-turkey treatment, the success or failure of which remains to be revealed. Within the Soviet Union there has been more talk than action about marketization of the economy, but there seems to be a growing consensus within the Soviet elite that something along these lines is a condition of survival (although clearly this consensus does not extend to the political implications of such a change).

The attention of the world media has rightly been focused on the upheaval within what used to be the Soviet empire. The outcome of this upheaval will have far-reaching and long-lasting consequences, not only for those countries themselves, but for the world as a whole. Yet the current capitalist revolution, if it is to be called that, is not limited to this one region. There has been turmoil in that other socialist giant, China, at least temporarily coming to a brutal halt with the repression of the summer of 1989. It is not at all clear, though, that the gerontocracy now in charge will manage to put the revolutionary genie back in its bottle; it is not even clear whether the present regime really wants to reverse the economic liberalization that has occurred, or whether it rather wants to put a stop only to the democratizing movement the former has engendered.

In many other parts of the world, meanwhile, market-oriented policies and pro-market rhetoric are flourishing. This is notably the case in Latin America, where a number of democratically elected governments have embarked on vigorously capitalist economic

PETER L. BERGER is Director of the Institute for the Study of Economic Culture at Boston University and a member of the Editorial Board of *FIRST THINGS*.

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policies. The same has been true, though to a lesser extent, in a number of African countries. It has been true for quite a long time in most of East and Southeast Asia. Since *capitalism* continues to be a negatively charged word in many places, especially among intellectuals, it is often avoided in favor of the less upsetting synonym *market economy*. Conversely, where *socialism* is still a word that uplifts some hearts, it will also be avoided as the term to describe a *nonmarket* economy; instead, reference may be made to *command*, *Communist*, or even *Stalinist* economies. These are semantic games. What is being described is, very clearly, a broad shift from socialist to capitalist models of economic organization.

Understandably, this turn has created a rather euphoric mood among those who have been in favor of capitalism all along. There is great satisfaction to be had for anyone who is in a position to say, I told you so!—especially anyone who used to be in a minority often treated with derision. It is also very satisfying to feel that one is ideologically attuned to the wave of the future or even (heaven forbid) the “end of history.” The left used to bask in just these satisfactions. Fair enough. Needless to say, I am a member of this pro-capitalist party within the West’s intelligentsia. This membership has not been altogether comfortable over the last twenty years, and it is nice for a change to be able to indulge in a bit of *Schadenfreude*. All the same, I think that the triumphalist mood prevailing at the moment in right-of-center circles is somewhat premature.

One hears the statement that socialism is “finished” or “discredited.” Both adjectives are ambiguous. To say that socialism is finished implies that there can be no successful attempts to restore it, in the same way that one might declare, for example, the Holy Roman Empire or the Albigensian heresy to be finished. That, however, is by no means clear. Not only may socialism survive for a long time in enclaves ranging in size from gargantuan China to minuscule Albania—even if most of the world goes capitalist—but there is also the very real possibility of restorations in countries that have already moved some distance in another direction. No sensible person would predict today what the Soviet Union will look like some ten years from now. A neo-Stalinist scenario can by no means be ruled out, and such a scenario would inevitably have powerful repercussions beyond the Soviet borders. In a different part of the world, the pro-capitalist governments in Latin America do not have many years to demonstrate that their policies can indeed help to solve the intractable economic and social miseries of that continent, and there is every reason to expect that, in the wake of failure, socialist solutions would gain credibility once more. I am convinced that such a return to socialism would be disastrously misguided, but I have learned not to confuse my own intellectual convictions with the logic

of history.

If one then says that socialism has been discredited, one would have to answer the question, Discredited with *whom*? With those who used to believe in it? With objective, informed analysts? With historians in the future? In some sense, I tend to think, no *idea* is ever finally discredited, once and for all finished. Even the Albigensian heresy has resurfaced in some versions of contemporary feminism, and while the resuscitation of the Holy Roman Empire would not appear to be a promising political project, some of the notions now in vogue in Central Europe are surprisingly consonant with at least the later manifestations of that empire’s ideology.

Historians in the future, looking back to our time, will presumably be as confused, as divided, and as opinionated as our own historians. There is no such thing as a “verdict of history,” only the stumbling and often silly interpretations of those who make it their business to judge the past. I regard myself as both informed and objective, and socialism is certainly discredited with me; there is probably a growing number of reasonably informed and thoughtful people who agree with me. Again, this is gratifying, but one should not make too much of it: most of mankind is neither objective nor informed. As to those for whom socialism has been a sustaining faith, they will find ways of reinterpreting current events in such a way as to leave their faith intact.

This process of reinterpretation can already be observed daily in various commentaries on the transformations in Eastern Europe: What is being swept away is “Communism” (or “state capitalism,” or “Stalinism”), but *not* “socialism”—which will live to see a better reincarnation. Or: These countries are being delivered from one bad system only to be plunged into one just as bad or worse—greedy, exploitative, oppressive capitalism. Or: The present situation is temporary; once these societies settle down and come to their senses, they will appreciate the advantages they still have over the West—precisely the fruits of socialism, however distorted this socialism may have been in other ways. And so on. To be sure, there will be some, perhaps even many, who will concede that their god has failed: there will be others who will confront the contradictions between their beliefs and reality *not* by changing their beliefs but by making the necessary adjustments in their definitions of reality.

Groups as much as individuals are ingenious in denying inconvenient or disagreeable facts. This is what psychoanalysts call rationalization. But, to stay within the Freudian universe of discourse one instant longer, there is also something called the “reality principle.” Facts have a way of *being there*, stubbornly resisting efforts to wish them away and haunting those who deny them. They even haunt those (such as, understandably, many on the left) who theorize that there *are* no facts outside our interpretations of them (an immensely convenient theory, by the way, for those

with an interest in denying reality). It follows that, while one must not exaggerate the historical efficacy of rational argument and empirical evidence, one must not fall into the opposite exaggeration of regarding the latter as having no effects at all. Actually, Freud put it very well when he observed that the voice of reason is quiet but persistent. This very modest optimism may serve as grounds for expecting that the scientific study of human affairs (including the social sciences) may be something more than the pastime of an esoteric underground—that is, it may have some public relevance. Be that as it may, let me now turn to the issue of what, if anything, may have to be revised in *The Capitalist Revolution* in the light of recent events.

II

As is to be expected, many propositions are unaffected, either way, by recent events. These propositions are as plausible or as implausible as they were five years ago. There are four important areas, though, to which recent events are indeed relevant: the relation of capitalism and prosperity, the relation of capitalism and democracy, the nature of socialism, and perhaps also the mythic power of the socialist idea.

When I say that recent events are relevant, I mean relevance in the business of theory construction to which *The Capitalist Revolution* was intended to contribute. In that strict sense one might say that recent events have added nothing that we did not know before or, more accurately, should have known as social scientists or otherwise as people attentive to empirical evidence. The crucial fact here, of course, is the vast superiority of capitalism in improving the material standards of living of large numbers of people, and *ipso facto* the capacity of a society to deal with those human problems amenable to public policy, notably those of poverty. But, if this fact had been clear for a long time, recent events have brought it quite dramatically to the forefront of public attention in much of the world, and by no means only in Europe. It is now more clear than ever that the inclusion of a national economy in the international capitalist system (*pace* all varieties of “dependency theory”) favors rather than hinders development, that capitalism remains the best bet if one wishes to improve the lot of the poor, and that policies fostering economic growth are more likely to equalize income differentials than are policies that deliberately foster redistribution.

Whereas these propositions have long appeared credible in economics departments in Western countries, they are now being propounded by governments from Budapest to Buenos Aires, by Communist *apparatchiks* and Peronist politicians, even here and there by revisionist Marxist intellectuals. This widened resonance is, strictly speaking, scientifically irrelevant, but it certainly improves the cultural context within

which social scientists must operate. Put simply, social scientists uttering these propositions about capitalism sound less and less like the proponents of flat-earth theory that, to many, they still appeared a few years ago. To be sure, there are holdouts, and not only among so-called conservatives in the Communist parties of China and the crumbling Soviet empire—for example, in the political and intellectual establishments in India, in the English-speaking universities of South Africa, or in the social-action bureaucracies of main-line Protestantism in the United States. But it is these holdouts, rather than their intellectual adversaries, who now appear as people who argue that the earth is flat.

In this connection the propositions in *The Capitalist Revolution* about the relation of capitalist prosperity and equality should also be reemphasized. We continue to hear that, yes indeed, capitalism increases prosperity, but at the price of gross inequalities. Since I wrote the book, nothing has changed my mind about the strong probability that the notion of a trade-off between growth and equality is false. The weight of the evidence indicates that the Kuznets effect does indeed hold (increased inequality as a modern economy takes off, with a leveling-off occurring within a reasonable time thereafter), but that it holds *regardless* of whether economic growth takes place under a capitalist or a socialist system. In other words, the basic choice between capitalism and socialism is irrelevant to the issue of equality, *except* that capitalism greatly accelerates the growth process, thus accelerating both the inegalitarian and the egalitarian phases of the Kuznets curve.

It follows that to opt for capitalism is *not* to opt for inequality at the price of growth; rather, it is to opt for an accelerating transformation of society. This undoubtedly produces tensions and exacts costs, but one must ask whether these are likely to be greater than the tensions and costs engendered by socialist stagnation. Moreover, the clearer view of the European socialist societies that has now become public radically debunks the notion that, whatever else may have ailed these societies, they were more egalitarian than those in the West: they were nothing of the sort. One must also remember that, comparatively speaking, these European societies were the most advanced in the socialist camp. The claims to greater equality are even hollower in the much poorer socialist societies in the Third World (China emphatically included).

We also hear a good deal today about social democracy as the putative “third way” between Soviet-style socialism and the allegedly brutal capitalism of the West. This talk is based on both a conceptual confusion and a lot of empirical uncertainty. Conceptually, it continues to be important to insist (as Marxists have always done, correctly) that capitalism and socialism are systems of *production*; under either one, there can be very different systems of *distribution*. Social democracy is precisely an approach to distribution.

Thus Sweden, the utopia of those who consider themselves social democrats, has an overwhelmingly capitalist production system; what distinguishes it (though not as much as some would think) from other capitalist societies is the size and scope of its welfare state. This is *not* a third way; it is a variant of the first way. It is thoroughly confusing to refer to it as a variant of socialism (as, incidentally, its critics often do as much as its advocates).

There continues to be a lot of empirical uncertainty about the amount of welfare-state expenditures a modern capitalist society can afford without undermining its productivity. And, by the way, the present condition of Sweden does not exactly enhance the utopian perspective on it. The same uncertainty prevails about the economic and social costs of non-welfare-state interventions of government in the economy. These are and will continue to be important issues between right-of-center and left-of-center parties in capitalist democracies; they are issues that have nothing to do with socialism. Very few people in the respectable spectrum of Western politics favor the abolition of the welfare state or the withdrawal of government from all economic interventions other than the printing of money and the enforcement of contracts. In other words, die-hard libertarians are a possibly endearing but politically irrelevant sect.

In terms of the capacity of capitalist societies to safeguard the welfare of their weaker members, the difficulties of integrating the former German Democratic Republic into Federal Germany throw sharp light on this matter. The problem was *not* how to integrate the superior welfare system of the DDR into the ruthless social policies of the Federal Republic; it was precisely the opposite. In this context it is worth recalling that from 1948 on (the beginning of the West Germany economic miracle), the phrase used by all, especially conservatives, to describe the system prevailing in the Federal Republic has been *social* market economy (*soziale Marktwirtschaft*). In that important sense, we are all social democrats.

By far the most dramatic relevance of recent events to the propositions in *The Capitalist Revolution* is in the relation of capitalism and democracy. And here I would say, at the risk of sounding self-congratulatory, that the plausibility of two key propositions has been enhanced—to wit, that capitalism is the necessary but not sufficient condition of democracy, and that market forces in a socialist or heavily statist society have a democratizing effect.

The former proposition is now being shouted from the rooftops in the formerly Communist societies in Europe. The urgency with which these governments now seek to install market economies is, of course, motivated by the desire to get out of the economic disaster created by forty years of socialist mismanagement; but it is also due to the insight that, without an effective market economy, the prospects for democ-

racy are very poor indeed. The theoretical issue here is the relation between economic and political liberalization; in Soviet terms, one might substitute *perestroika* and *glasnost*.

It seems likely that the underlying relation between these two processes was not clear at all to the Soviet elite that launched the reform process; it may not be quite clear even now in those circles (though there are indications that it is becoming more so). Put simply, to open up a socialist society politically while leaving in place most of the structures of the command economy is asking for trouble: the economic gains will be sparse, slow, and very unequally distributed, and those who are thereby hurt will have increasing opportunity to complain, to organize politically, and to destabilize the process. Put simply, the Soviet regime would have been better advised to keep *glasnost* limping a few steps behind *perestroika*; in the event, it did precisely the opposite and by now it is probably too late to reverse the effects of the sequence.

By contrast, the Chinese regime did have something like the “correct” sequence in mind, and it pursued this course with a good deal of success for several years. It seems that what the reformist elite in Beijing had in mind was not too different from what happened in Taiwan after the Kuomintang regime was installed there following its retreat from the mainland—a broad economic liberalization presided over by an authoritarian government (indeed, in mainland debates the phrase “the new authoritarianism” was used to describe the political management of the marketization process). It is not clear why the regime abruptly changed course in 1989, not only repressing the political liberalization with great brutality but also putting brakes on the economic liberalization. It requires no great Sinological competence to predict that, unless there is a reversion to the earlier course, a very high price will have to be paid in terms of China’s economic development.

It is important to reiterate that, while capitalism appears to be a precondition for democracy, the converse is *not* the case. Much as one might deplore this, it is quite possible for capitalism to develop under nondemocratic regimes (although these will be of the authoritarian rather than totalitarian variety). The entire history of capitalism both in the West and in East Asia testifies to this, but recent history provides additional examples. The astounding economic takeoff of Spain in recent years began with the pro-capitalist policies during the final years of the Franco regime; a similar economic drama has been unfolding in Pinochet’s Chile. Needless to say, this in no way justifies the atrocities committed by these two governments, both distinguished by odious records in the area of human rights. But it is important to understand that the relation between capitalism and democracy is *asymmetrical*—the latter presupposes the former, but not vice versa. It might be observed that economic success is not necessarily hindered by tyrannical and

inhumane governance. Thus the Kuomintang regime brutally suppressed an independence movement in Taiwan in the early years of its establishment there, with bloodshed that, in that smaller territory, can probably vie with the massacres on the mainland in 1989. The further observation is equally important, though: As the Taiwanese economic miracle took off, the regime progressively liberalized itself and is now decisively on the road toward democracy; the Beijing rulers appear headed in the opposite direction, with socialism still intact.

To repeat, while there can be capitalism without democracy, successful capitalism releases democratizing forces; similar democratizing effects can be observed if a socialist or heavily statist society makes successful moves toward the market. Both Spain and Chile can be cited by way of evidence. It may well be that this relationship was understood only too well in Beijing in 1989. I see no reason to change the way I formulated this relationship earlier. Peasants who are no longer hungry become uppity—a very inconvenient situation for those who used to lord it over them, no matter whether the lords are feudal oligarchs or a socialist *nomenklatura*. The differences between these two types of elites are not as great as their respective rhetorics would make one think—which is why socialist regimes are so easily superimposed on traditionally feudal or oligarchical societies. One might even say that the only genuine revolution under modern conditions is that of democratic capitalism.

So recent events have not instilled doubts in my mind about my earlier characterization of socialism, neither about its economic inefficiency nor its propensity toward dictatorial governance. The events of 1989 and 1990, however, do necessitate an important theoretical adjustment and raise an important question. The theoretical adjustment concerns the understanding of totalitarianism. Ever since Hannah Arendt, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and Carl Friedrich gave the concept of totalitarianism wide currency in political science, a common view (initiated by them, especially by Arendt) has been to the effect that a totalitarian system, once established, is very difficult if not impossible to remove from within—only outside force can do so (as was the case with Nazi Germany). The collapse of Communist regimes in Europe and the unfolding political drama in the Soviet Union itself, no matter the eventual outcome of these developments, can already be said to have falsified this proposition. On the contrary, it became clear that only outside force (the might of the Soviet military) had kept these regimes going; remove that outside force, and these governments collapsed like card houses. The steps by which this collapse then took place, from the first stirrings of popular discontent to the defection of security forces to the side of the revolution, closely resemble similar stages in nontotalitarian dictatorships, indeed closely follow the prescriptions of

Leninist revolutionary theory. This falsification of at least Arendt's notion of the invulnerability of totalitarianism does not invalidate other features of her theory, nor does it detract from the usefulness of the concept (including the distinction it makes between the two types of dictatorial regimes). But I certainly regard as good news our new insight into the fragility of the totalitarian project and into the dogged persistence of elements of "civil society" even after decades of relentless assault.

The important question about the transition from socialism raised by recent events is that of the optimal way to manage it. The basic alternative is between incremental and "big-push" approaches, and there are good theoretical arguments to be made for both. General knowledge of history and, more specifically, of the rapid revolutions of modern times make one lean toward gradualism, toward incremental rather than cataclysmic change. Both capitalism and democracy require special institutions through which to operate, and institutions take time to be constructed and to become taken-for-granted presences in people's lives. On the other hand, even a general bias toward incremental change cannot foreclose the possibility that there may be particular situations in which something else is called for; the transition from socialism to capitalism may well be such a special case.

The long experience with gradualism in Yugoslavia and Hungary does not encourage the incremental approach; it appears that the half-measures toward the market are economically unsatisfactory and that they create new problems, notably that of widespread corruption. Almost inevitably, in a partially marketized economy there must be collusion between the new entrepreneurs and the bureaucrats who still control the "commanding heights" of the economy. This type of corruption evidently reached heroic dimensions in China and was the most immediate grievance of the students' protest movement (an unfortunate fixation on a symptom instead of the disease, one might say). These considerations in turn would favor a single, radical push—one cold-turkey treatment currently being tried in Poland and being at least considered in other socialist societies in Europe. In a nonsocialist but statist context, similar big-push strategies are now being implemented in several Latin American countries. As of now, the question must remain unresolved. Fortunately or unfortunately, some answers are likely to be forthcoming fairly soon.

Just as there is no third way, there is no such thing as market socialism. Not that recent events were needed to demonstrate this, but it appears that this conclusion has now been reached by quite a few people who previously thought otherwise. Among these has been no less than the current pope, who both in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* and even more clearly in *Centesimus Annus* explicitly repudiated the idea,

widely popular on the Roman Catholic left, that it should look for a third way between what it considered two morally equivalent evils. (I will not comment here on the peculiar morality that makes such a perspective possible.)

My earlier proposition about the superior mythogenic power of socialism has not been falsified, either. It may yet be. But even if the glittering vision of socialism should seriously pale, it is still very doubtful whether capitalism as such would generate a myth of its own (for more people, that is, than can be counted as followers of Ayn Rand). Democracy is a more likely candidate. There are less attractive possibilities. Nationalism continues to be an ideology (or, more accurately, a collection of ideologies) of unbroken appeal, and the homicidal tribalisms breaking out throughout the decomposing Soviet empire suggest even more chilling scenarios for the age that was to be the end of ideology (*a.k.a.* the end of history).

The startling aspect of the collapse of Communist regimes in Europe has been its rapidity and relative ease, once the restraining force of Soviet bayonets was removed. It is this aspect that has, I think, falsified that portion of the theory of totalitarianism that asserted the invulnerability of such regimes against internal challenges, and this would be so even if the democratic and pluralistic tendencies in the region were to be reversed in the near or distant future. The monolith, it is now evident, had many more holes in it than Arendt and others envisaged.

But equally startling has been the survival, beneath the glacial structures of the totalitarian states, of a variety of social and cultural traits that faithfully replicate the pretotalitarian situation. Institutionally, these are especially rooted in the family and in religion. But there are also cultural configurations (or, if one prefers, structures of consciousness—beliefs, values, moral and ideological propensities) that have re-emerged, seemingly unscathed, with the demise of Communist power (or even, as in the Soviet Union, with a diminution of that power). Nationalism, an emphatically modern ideology, is only one of these. There are other beliefs and values, some of them reaching far back into the premodern past. They range from ancient ethnic antagonisms to ways of looking

at work. Some of them may turn out to be decisive obstacles to the establishment of democratic and pluralistic societies. They are also likely to influence in an important way the success or failure of efforts to establish market economies in these countries. The cultural differences between, for example, Czechs and Romanians, or Slovenians and Serbs, simply cannot be ignored in the considerations of economic reformers, not to mention the even more glaring differences among the nationalities that make up the Soviet Union.

As I noted earlier, it is very doubtful whether any body of ideas can ever be declared to be “finished” in human history, particularly socialism, with its mythopoetic power. I would say, however, that this particular idea should be finished as a serious topic of inquiry for social science, except for its continued relevance in the analysis of specific groups (be they African dictators or Western intellectuals) with a vested interest in its survival. Not only the economic dynamics but also the political and social consequences of the two basic modes of production of the modern era should by now be quite clear. Put differently, as far as social science is concerned, the question of socialism may now be safely put to rest.

III

As I tried to express emphatically in the opening pages of *The Capitalist Revolution*, science deals in probabilities, not certainties; in hypotheses, not dogma. Social reality is ever in flux, and recently it has been in flux with a vengeance. It is gratifying to see some of one's hypotheses confirmed, annoying to have to admit that one was wrong or not prescient enough. Unanswered questions can gnaw and irritate, especially if they *remain* unanswered for many years. But what draws one back to the social-scientific enterprise, ever again, is what drew one in the first place: the rich diversity and often stunning surprises of human behavior. Capitalism is a phenomenon of rich diversity indeed, and again and again its vitality and its inventiveness surprise us. It is unlikely to lose its fascination in the lifetime of even the youngest reader of *The Capitalist Revolution*. □

Man, Woman, and Public Policy

Barbara Dafoe Whitehead and David Blankenhorn

Our topic is sexual identity and the meaning of gender in elite public discourse. Few topics are more important, for what is ultimately at stake is nothing less than how we raise our children and what kind of people we wish to be. Yet it is also a dangerous, almost forbidden, topic. To say anything interesting about this subject is likely to give offense to many of our nation's policy and opinion leaders. For ironically, in a society purporting great interest in all things sexual, our elite discussion of gender is almost quaintly repressed and sublimated, governed primarily by taboo, euphemism, and silence, and undergirded by a cast-iron orthodoxy that insists on the fundamental social irrelevance of sexual differences between women and men.

Let us state our thesis plainly. While we do not uncritically accept the separate-spheres gender philosophy of our parents' and grandparents' generations, we do believe that, on the whole, our own generation's prevailing gender philosophy—typified by its adamant denial of difference and dependency—has harmed, rather than helped, the search for a common life for man and woman that promotes the accomplishment and happiness of each. Specifically, we believe that current public discourse on this subject is dominated, to its detriment, by twin ideals of androgyny and expressive individualism. The result is a public philosophy that undermines families, neglects children, and makes individual adult happiness more difficult to achieve.

I

In his *Road to Divorce*, the historian Lawrence Stone describes the recent transformation of Western societies from “largely non-separating and non-

divorcing” ones to “separating and divorcing” ones as “perhaps the most profound and far-reaching social change to have occurred in the last five hundred years.” Consider the numbers. In the United States in 1960, there were thirty-five divorced persons for every 1,000 married persons. Today there are 142—a 406 percent increase in thirty years. During that same period, the proportion of children living with only one parent jumped from 9 percent to 25 percent. Between 1960 and 1985, the percent of all childbirths occurring outside of marriage increased from 5 to 22; the percent of teenage mothers who are unmarried increased from 15 to 58; and the overall proportion of American adult life spent in residence with both a spouse and at least one child dropped from 62 percent, the highest in our nation's history, to 43 percent, the lowest in our history.

These numbers reflect two processes. The first is deinstitutionalization: the erosion of marriage as a social institution embodying widely shared moral values. The second is dejuridification: the shrinking of the legal regulation of marriage. Together, these processes have transformed marriage from a binding social commitment to an essentially private, freely terminable lifestyle option. In essence, divorce has become a “right”—less a judicial issue than an administrative procedure.

What caused this momentous change? Let us begin with language. Consider the most important new word to emerge during the divorce revolution: “no-fault.” Almost all of our grandparents, as well as most of our parents, would be amazed and distressed by the claim that ending a marriage is unrelated to issues of fault and morality. Yet in 1969, California became the first state—indeed, the first jurisdiction in the Western world—to eliminate all fault-based grounds for divorce. Over the next fifteen years, this new type of divorce law—and the new word describing it—spread rapidly across the country. By 1987, forty states plus the District of Columbia had revised their divorce laws in ways that, according to Mary Ann Glendon,

BARBARA DAFOE WHITEHEAD directs the *Family in American Culture* project of the Institute for American Values in New York City. DAVID BLANKENHORN is President of the Institute.

tilted "decidedly toward easy nonfault divorce."

During this time in the United States, Glendon continues, "the 'no-fault' idea blended readily with the psychological jargon that already had such a strong influence on how Americans think about their personal relationships . . . [and] fit neatly into an increasingly popular mode of discourse in which values are treated as matters of taste, feelings of guilt are regarded as unhealthy, and an individual's primary responsibility is assumed to be to himself."

The ideology and practice of no-fault thus transforms marriage both personally and socially. Personally, the no-fault idea tells us that, when a marriage ends, no one is to blame. People change; people grow apart; people must above all pursue their own happiness. Socially, no-fault terminology tells us that marriage is essentially a private matter, designed for the fulfillment of the individual spouses. Other prospective stakeholders in the relationship—such as children or the society as a whole—are understood to be at best minority shareholders whose claims are effectively without standing and therefore unenforceable.

These ideas stand in sharp contrast to the common wisdom of our parents' generation, perhaps best summarized in a famous essay by Roscoe Pound, who insisted that family law "must distinguish the individual interests in domestic relations from the social interest in the family and marriage as social institutions." This social interest, Pound argued, is twofold: "the maintenance of the family as a social institution" and "the protection of dependent persons, in securing to all individuals a moral and social life and in the rearing and training of sound and well-bred citizens for the future."

Finally, the no-fault idea reflects, in microcosm, a much broader set of newly regnant cultural values that substantially redefine our society's understanding of love, mating, and adulthood. As sociologist Ann Swidler points out in her essay on "Love and Adulthood in American Culture," these values celebrate above all "a new concern with the survival, wholeness, and autonomy of the self that makes self-sacrifice seem weakness, and self-realization seem a moral duty." For Swidler, the new story of love and marriage "validates adulthood as a period of continuing crisis, challenge, and change" that "provides no resting place from demands on the self." Because it rejects the idea of the self as "a stable achievement," the new story fails to "make the achievement of adult commitment, fidelity, intimacy, and care themselves seem heroic, meaningful achievements." At the heart of this new story is the idea that dependencies and permanent commitments are obstacles rather than pathways to fulfillment.

The new values carry wide-ranging consequences. In our society, divorce is approaching a rough parity with marriage as an expectation, ritual, and experience

of adult life. In just three decades, the proportion of Americans who believe that couples who do not get along should not stay together for the sake of the children has increased from a decided minority to an overwhelming majority. Divorce has penetrated every aspect of our culture. A new national magazine called *Divorce* was launched in 1987. Newspaper society pages chronicle divorce parties along with debutante parties. Greeting card companies now include divorce cards ("Think of your marriage as a record album. It was full of music, both happy and sad. But what's important now is YOU: the newly released hot new single!") in their inventories of "occasion" cards. A liquor ad featured in magazines shows two women in conversation with a caption reading: "He's crazy about my kid. And he drinks Johnnie Walker." Numerous religious denominations—including Lutherans, United Methodists, Episcopalians, Unitarians, and the United Church of Christ—have incorporated divorce prayers and accompanying rituals into their liturgies. A new line of children's books includes titles such as *The Divorce Workbook: A Guide for Kids and Families*.

What is to be done? The challenge, clearly, is not primarily economic or political, but cultural. The problem is especially rooted within elite culture. It is necessary, therefore, to confront directly the newly ascendant cultural values. In the area of divorce, the most effective tool is also the most controversial: the reestablishment of the social stigma that has traditionally accompanied voluntary family dissolution. Today the word "stigma" is generally used pejoratively, as are such related words as "guilt," "shame," or "blame." But if a primary negative imperative is to banish the idea of "no-fault" from our thinking about divorce, a key step in the process is to reclaim our appreciation and use of stigma.

Stigmatizing a behavior will reduce its frequency. To test this hypothesis, observe the current behavior of those whose preferences run toward smoking in crowded restaurants, littering beaches, or using racially derogatory language on television. Conversely, it is an anthropological commonplace that de-stigmatizing a behavior will increase its frequency. Without this type of values shift, little effective change will occur, regardless of what policymakers do.

At the same time, politics also affects culture. Laws and public policies do more than distribute resources and establish rules and incentives. They also convey normative messages. They help shape our public conversation—our cultural stories—about who we are and who we want to be. Reform of our marriage laws, therefore, can contribute, at least indirectly, to a broader renewal of the marital relationship. The first priority is surely to reverse the legal trend toward easy, no-fault, little-responsibility divorce—especially when the separation is contested by one spouse, and most especially when minor children are involved.

Much of the no-fault idea is rooted in the assumptions of androgyny and individualism. No-fault divorce laws tend to assume, for example, that the division of marital property is the principal means for settling the financial aspects of divorce. After the divorce, it is assumed, each spouse can and should be largely self-sufficient. Yet if we look at the real-life facts of gender roles and dependent relationships, the flaws in these assumptions become clear. Roughly three-fifths of all divorces involve minor dependent children who, overwhelmingly, end up in the custody of their mothers. Most ex-wives, due in part to pre-divorce work and childrearing arrangements, have much lower earnings capacity after divorce than do their ex-husbands.

The result of ignoring these gender and dependency realities is that, after divorce, the living standards of women and children tend to drop, often dramatically, while the living standards of men tend to rise. Moreover, even with improvements brought about by federally mandated state child-support guidelines, child support payments by non-custodial parents, almost always fathers, tend to be quite low—in part because judicial discretion allows judges, operating on the self-sufficiency assumption, to award low payments and in part because the absence of meaningful post-divorce supervision means that only a minority of mothers receive full payment of the support that has been awarded.

These facts help explain why women, rather than men, have emerged as the most persistent and eloquent critics of our current divorce laws. As Mary Ann Glendon puts it: “American divorce law in practice seems to be saying to parents, especially to mothers, that it is not safe to devote oneself primarily or exclusively to raising children.”

II

The androgynous imperative within elite discourse is most evident, and especially harmful, when it seeks to suppress or deny the differences between mothers and fathers. Most fundamentally, it contests thousands of years of precisely those aspects of our bio-evolutionary history that have favored, above all, the survival of the human infant. By shifting the focus of family life away from children and toward adult satisfaction, the new imperative assaults those cultural norms of parental sacrifice and denial that are essential to successful childrearing. Ultimately, therefore, the androgynous imperative challenges the central prerequisite of social life: fostering the competence and character of the next generation.

Again, consider the key words: “mother” and “father.” What are their meanings in today’s elite discourse? Historically, of course, the definition of these words goes far beyond “female parent” and “male parent.” The *Oxford English Dictionary* devotes six pages to the word “mother” and its cognates and four

pages to “father” and its cognates. Indeed, we can find few, if any, words in our language that are more richly invested with personal, social, cultural, moral, and religious meaning.

Similarly, we can locate no other words more essential to our understanding of gender differences. Certainly anthropologists, sociobiologists, endocrinologists, ethnologists, and obstetricians would all resist, on professional grounds, the obfuscation of these words. (So, for that matter, would most babies.) Yet elite discourse increasingly insists that we speak, not of mothers and fathers, but of the androgynous and even non-familial “parent” or “co-parent.”

“In anticipating parenthood,” says a 1978 parents’ manual written by the Boston Women’s Health Collective, “whether natural or adoptive, we both eagerly awaited our child’s arrival and worried about ways our life together would change. We are no longer simply ‘lovers,’ ‘friends,’ ‘partners,’ but co-parents in another kind of venture altogether.”

The deracination of our vocabulary of sexual differences has its ironic side. In a culture drenched in the imagery and language of adolescent sexuality—a culture that tolerates, and at times promotes, the onset of sexual activity at ever younger ages—we detect a curious primness about mature sexual differences. When it comes to mothers and fathers, elite culture shies away from fecund women and virile men and seems much more comfortable with interchangeable androgynes.

Irony aside, however, the substitution of “parent” for “mother” and “father” serves explicit political and cultural objectives. First, it aims at establishing what Alice Rossi terms an “egalitarian ethos” in child nurture which “urges several programmatic changes in family organization: a reduction of maternal investment in children to permit greater psychic investment in work outside the family, an increased investment by men in their fathering roles, and the supplementation of parental care by institutional care.”

Second, the gender-neutral “parent” also seeks to establish moral equivalency among family types. Thus married mothers and fathers, single mothers and fathers, lesbian and gay custodians of children—all become equalized as the same thing: “parents.” By liberating us from the concreteness of traditional familial statuses and sexual identities, the new “parent” encourages us to embrace as equivalents all possible childrearing forms and to remove any distinctions of gender and family form from our understanding of parenthood.

Moreover, “parent” can be isolated not only from gender and family status, but also from kinship itself. Thus a 1991 conference publication from the Child Welfare League proposes a “many parents” model of childrearing that approvingly suggests equivalency among the “many parents”—“biological parents,

kinship care parents, family foster parents, group care or house parents, and adoptive parents"—of our nation's children.

Consider another word that is essential to a vocabulary of difference: pregnancy. Pregnancy, a condition unique to female mammals, is a primary expression of biological difference between the sexes. Moreover, the word "pregnancy," like the words "mother" and "father," is historically redolent with positive cultural meaning: it is a "blessed event," the state of "expecting" and of "being with child." These definitions helped to tell a story of pregnancy in our culture—a story that sacralized a physiological event and exalted the pregnant woman.

Today, we increasingly tell ourselves a quite different story. Consider a typical version of the new story, written in 1977 in Patricia Ashdown-Sharp's *A Guide to Pregnancy and Parenthood for Women on Their Own*: "Pregnancy is a momentous event in any woman's life, married or single, and it helps to understand your initial feelings, which may include any of the following, or even several mixed up at the same time." The list of feelings includes: pleasure, doubts and fears, embarrassment, apathy, activity, running away, and suicide. In this story, pregnancy is increasingly portrayed as problematic and difficult—a source of anxiety, fear, and unwelcome dependency. The overall result is a new cultural definition: pregnancy as disability.

Certainly both popular wisdom and medical opinion dispute this understanding. Yet neither of these sources of authority guided the legislative establishment of pregnancy leave in the United States. Passed as an amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Pregnancy Discrimination Act was part of a larger effort to secure equal rights for women in the workforce and to provide statutory protections for all workers without regard to gender.

Cast as an issue of civil rights and argued in the familiar American idiom of individualism and formal equality, pregnancy can no longer be viewed simply as a healthy condition unique to women. Instead, it must be construed as a temporary disability, like a broken leg, no different from any other temporary disability that might handicap any other worker.

This redefinition of pregnancy—from blessed event to disability—reflects a broader change: the cultural shift from a family-based ethic to an employment-based ethic. Historically, pregnancy has been exclusively a family event, *extra-commercium*. It is now increasingly a workplace event, mediated by the money world.

Consider the meaning of this shift. The family perspective understands pregnancy and childbirth as the central event of family life, to be welcomed with ceremony, thankfulness, and celebration. The labor-force perspective understands pregnancy as a workplace disruption that weakens employees' attachments

to their jobs, increases absenteeism, and reduces productivity.

The old story of pregnancy and childbirth accentuated the differences between men and women—physical, emotional, and social—and reinforced the cultural ideal of separate and complementary spheres. A classic rendering of that story is found in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. The scene is one of radical separation, with a clear division of physical and emotional labor. Levin waits in an anteroom as his beloved Kitty goes into labor. Kitty submits to the physical pains of childbirth while Levin experiences emotional anguish as devastating as her physical pain.

Leaning his head against the doorpost in the next room, he stood there listening to someone shriek and moan in a way he had never heard before, and he knew these sounds were coming from what had once been Kitty. He no longer had any desire for a child. Now he hated that child. He did not even want her to live any more; all he wanted was an end to this horrible suffering.

Levin's emotional vulnerability, his fear and ignorance, contrast sharply with Kitty's emotional strength, physical courage, and womanly knowledge. These are the familiar elements of the old story. With a winking apology to Tolstoy, one might even compare Levin to Ricky Ricardo in the famous January 1953 television episode of *I Love Lucy*—an episode that captured the largest audience share in American television history. Rotund and serene in her impending maternity, Lucy arrives at the hospital carrying her own suitcase, while Ricky is pushed alongside in a wheelchair, emotionally unhinged and temporarily disabled.

The old story, moreover, extends these differences into the post-partum period. Popular advice literature warns a husband that his wife will experience new emotions; she may, in fact, lavish more affection on the new baby than on him. Family life will change, the old story warns. A new baby exacts new and different sacrifices from mother and father—sacrifices that result, however, in life's highest rewards.

The new story explains these same physical, psychological, and social components of pregnancy and childbirth, but through a radically different narrative. Underlying the new story is the cultural ideal of androgyny. It minimizes, rather than celebrates, the differences between mothers and fathers. It focuses not on family and biological identity, but on individual rights and options. In short, it recasts the experience of pregnancy and childbirth into the familiar terms of the marketplace and of what Robert Bellah terms the therapeutic model. Accordingly, pregnancy and childbirth become yet one more path to greater individual freedom and self-expression.

In the old story, pregnancy separates women from men. In the new story, pregnancy brings the sexes together. Men, in fact, join women in the state of pregnancy, so that couples versed in the latest linguistic fashions tell their friends that “we are pregnant.” Men should join women in the delivery room, since mothers and fathers should share as equally as possible the pain and pleasure of childbirth.

At the same time, the woman in the new story must zealously defend her freedom and independence. In *Your Baby, Your Way*, Sheila Kitzinger urges the expectant mother to draw up a birth plan designed to achieve an autonomous birth. This task aims, not simply at achieving an obstetrically trouble-free birth, but at liberating the pregnant woman from medical, social, and legal constraints. Childbirth is a political act: “Through striving to achieve autonomy in childbirth—the biological act that epitomizes a woman’s role as mother, nurturer, homemaker—conformists become nonconformists, assimilators become dissidents, charming, polite, compliant women become political activists.”

Yet, paradoxically, the emphasis on rights and options only makes pregnancy more problematic. According to Kitzinger,

a woman’s experience of pregnancy and birth is likely to be fraught with a sense of inadequacy and powerlessness. At the point when she is bringing new life into the world and a tremendous power is released in her body, she feels most helpless. She is trapped in a situation outside her control.

We are now looking at exact opposites. In the old story, pregnancy empowers. In the new story, it disempowers.

Where do these new definitions come from? Again, we look to culture. We believe that the heart of the matter—not merely a reflection, but rather the basic source of the new story—is a shift in cultural values. Specifically, as noted, we look to the growing influence of the twin cultural values of androgyny and expressive individualism.

In *Reclaimed Powers*, a cross-cultural study of gender patterns in aging, David Gutmann describes a pivotal event in human development: the “parental emergency.” Young parents respond to the emergency in two ways. First, they assume the gender-specific roles learned during early socialization—roles they may have modified, experimented with, or even ignored before they became parents. Second, they abandon narcissistic strivings toward omnipotentiality. They voluntarily limit their potential freedoms in order to secure the physical and psychological well-being of the dependent child. As Gutmann puts it, “There is general agreement that parents will, as part of their general servitude, accept deep restrictions on

their own needs and deep revisions of their own psychological make-up in order to meet their children’s essential needs.”

In short, parenthood demands that children come first. Its essential requirement is sacrifice and denial. Its result is “the routine, unexamined heroism of parenting.” In Gutmann’s cross-cultural studies, parental altruism approaches the status of a universal norm, since it is essential to the survival of the species.

Yet to what degree is this norm reflected in our public discourse and policy debate about gender roles and childrearing? The answer is unsettling. Clearly, the dominant discourse seeks to extend, rather than suppress, the narcissistic tendencies of young adulthood. For parents, no less than non-parents, the self—not the other or the neighbor or the child or the family—constitutes the governing moral idea of contemporary culture.

Even a casual reading of advice literature for new parents reveals this tendency. Compared to the old story, far greater emphasis is attached to recognizing and affirming adult “needs” as against baby’s demands. In the old story, the arrival of a new baby ushered in a period of mutual sacrifice. In the new story, a baby tests the parents’ own sense of independence with its assertion of neediness. Parents must “balance” the baby’s needs against other social and personal “needs.” The very title of one parenting manual, *Ourselves and Our Children*, succinctly states the new set of priorities: parents come first.

These new definitions of parenthood and pregnancy reflect larger changes in our family ethos and civic culture. In his essay on “The Invasion of the Money World,” Robert Bellah argues that the values and language of the marketplace are invading the family realm and, more broadly, the realms of church, neighborhood, and community. Activities once assigned to families—child care, meals, even outdoor play—are increasingly monetized: converted to services that are bought and sold in the marketplace. As one part of this trend, mothers, who have traditionally dominated the realms of family and community life, now pursue, or at least are strongly expected to pursue, regular paid employment outside the home.

As a result, the separate sphere of family and community life is both shrinking and losing its distinctive character. Increasingly, this sphere no longer constitutes an independent moral realm containing relationships and values different from those of the commercial realm. This trend helps explain why women are no longer considered—nor, at least in the dominant discourse, would they want to be considered—more virtuous or innocent than men. More importantly, this trend tells us why home and family are no longer expected to serve as the essential base of women’s power and self-esteem.

Not that everything in the new story is for the worse. Certain revisions in traditional gender roles, we believe, have been beneficial for both men and women. Women today have far greater opportunities for a public life, with its considerable recognition and rewards, than did our mothers' generation. Moreover, as the life span increases and as the proportion of life devoted to childrearing concomitantly decreases, women clearly have more time, over the course of the life cycle, to devote to work in the marketplace. We see benefits for men as well. Men no longer must bear sole responsibility for breadwinning. With a mutual, if not equivalent, commitment to both the worlds of paid work and of family, husbands and wives who stay together may achieve a greater harmony of interests and perhaps even greater emotional closeness.

At the same time, separate-spheres philosophy—properly, we believe—located life's most enduring virtues and satisfactions not in the marketplace or even in the public square, but in the home. Indeed, nineteenth-century feminism hoped to reform the world according to the model of home and family. Domesticating the marketplace, not commercializing the domestic realm, was the central focus of much early feminist thought.

Thus, the current identification of home and family as the source not of woman's strength but of her weakness stands as a sharp departure from earlier feminist traditions. And when some contemporary feminists attack traditional family life as oppressive, they frequently fail to recognize that men as well as women have historically embraced the sacrifices and restrictions of family life as their best chance for happiness and individual fulfillment. In an important respect, the gender script of our parents' generation was intended to be less blatantly sexist than aggressively familistic.

As much as American culture in the 1950s worshipped Mom in the kitchen, it celebrated Dad in the den. Father's Day became an important national holiday during this period, as Hallmark cards iconized the "at-home" dad, with his pipe and newspaper. Television viewers seldom saw the father of *Father Knows Best* at work. We never knew what Ozzie Nelson or Ward Cleaver did for a living. For these television dads, the pathway to the good life ran, not through the office, but straight to the backyard with the kids.

In contrast, the contemporary vision of happiness and progress as reflected in elite discourse is seldom identified with building a family. The new vision focuses on achievement in the marketplace. It is rooted, above all, in the assumption of a fully mobilized workforce. In this story, both women and men find fulfillment and contribute to the good of society through their participation in the workforce and in their behavior as paid workers and consumers.

Consider our public policy debate on child care. It is dominated by a labor-force, as opposed to family,

perspective. The debate frequently centers less on what is best for the parent-child relationship than it does on what is best for the labor force. To the degree, for example, that the mother-child relationship conflicts with the mother-job relationship, the mother-job relationship is almost always treated as primary.

This economic focus in child care debate reflects, in large part, the remarkable success of the "work-family" movement of the 1980s—a broad coalition of corporate consultants, policy think tanks, business leaders, legislative lobbyists, and others who seek, in the words of one prominent organization, "new approaches for balancing the changing needs of America's families with the continuing need for workplace productivity." A national work-family conference in 1988, entitled "Child Care: The Bottom Line," elaborates this perspective:

Never before in the history of the United States has the issue of child care been so inextricably linked with the state of the nation's economy. Not only does the availability of affordable, high-quality child care affect the well-being of the majority of American families, it affects the bottom line of every business in the nation and . . . inevitably . . . affects the United States' ability to compete successfully in a global economy.

As one national leader of the work-family movement recently put it: "Child care is really an economic development issue" that is "as essential for getting people to work as public transportation." This approach became truly bipartisan during the 1980s, defining the discourse of Republicans as well as Democrats. The most influential child care report of the Reagan Administration, for example, organized by the Department of Labor, was entitled "Child Care: A Workforce Issue."

Such an approach sends a clear message to both policymakers and families. The message to policymakers is that child care is a matter of economic policy, designed almost exclusively for mothers who work full time in the paid labor force. Thus, for U.S. Representative Patricia Schroeder, probably the nation's most influential advocate of the work-family agenda, to argue that child care policies should recognize the role of non-employed parents is "like saying the highway program must recognize people who don't drive."

This approach leads to specific and dubious policy consequences. Most of the child care debate in the 1980s, for example, assumed that the goal is to allow more parents, especially mothers, to achieve a new "balance" that, in practice, would mean less time with children and more time at work. Yet considerable evidence suggests that many mothers want precisely the opposite: to spend less time in the workplace in order to spend more time with family. The chief policy

recommendation of the economic assumption is more day care centers. In contrast, the chief recommendation of the familistic assumption is more part-time work and other options to reduce, rather than increase, hours of paid employment.

For families—or again more specifically, for mothers—the message of today’s child care debate is not to feel “guilty” or overly constrained by the responsibilities of childbearing and childrearing. The new imperative is not to permit the demands of children to stand in the way of work responsibilities.

In sum, we identify three major tendencies in our current public discourse and policy debates on parenthood: the universalization of what Sylvia Hewlett terms the “competitive male model,” the denial of parental altruism, and the invasion of the family culture by the jobs culture. These tendencies contribute to a regnant cultural ethos, especially strong among elites, that is harmful both to the quality of our public discourse and to the well-being of families, particularly children.

In the realm of everyday life and practical morality, most Americans, if asked, say that they seek happiness through family life, not through their careers. Most women want to be mothers and prefer staying home while their children are very young. Most women want and expect financial and emotional support from husbands and fathers. Many, we suspect most, divorced mothers view divorce as harmful to children. Yet our dominant elite discourse about love, marriage, and parenthood would have it quite the other way on each of these issues.

Finally, the ideals of androgyny and expressive individualism behind the dominant ethos fail to deliver on their basic promise: they do not make for greater individual happiness. Individual happiness and family obligation are not, as the elite story would have it, antithetical. Survey research shows quite compellingly that happiness with marriage and family life remains by far the strongest predictor of personal happiness and overall life satisfaction.

III

We conclude with a political question: Should public policies strive explicitly to counteract the prevailing tilt toward androgyny and expressive individualism? To what degree can, and ought, politics seek to influence culture in the area of gender differences and dependencies?

Certainly a case can be made for public policies that affirm gender differences. For example, our society’s new divorce laws, firmly rooted in the assumptions of androgyny and individualism, simply fail to acknowledge, to a remarkable degree, the roles of most mothers within most marriages. Our no-fault divorce laws, in fact, constitute a clear embodiment of the competitive male model—a model that rewards autonomous achievement in the marketplace while

largely ignoring our social and individual interests in the family and in caring for dependent children. In this case, current policy goes beyond simply the formulation of gender-neutral legal categories. These new laws are indifferent, even hostile, to important social interests.

Yet despite this caveat, we believe that, as a general rule, public policies should seek to be gender-neutral—they should generally refrain from directly defining gender identities or assigning gender roles within the family, the workplace, or public life.

In the area of divorce, for example, we believe that our laws must offer more protection for women and children. Yet this imperative does not require the law to establish gender-specific legal categories. It requires only that the law acknowledge the divisions of labor within marriage and the social importance of child-rearing. In the area of custody, for example, we do not have to say: “Custody shall go to the mother.” We only have to say: “Custody shall go to the person who is already providing the most day-to-day care for this child.” Sometimes, that person will be the father. Most times, not.

In the workplace as well, policies should steer this middle ground. They should be family-friendly. But they should not seek explicitly to define the gender identities and roles of workers. Thus we favor generous “parental” leave, not “maternity” leave, even as we know that most workers who use it will be mothers. The same principle should govern wage-and-hour policies, employee benefits, and other workplace policies. Such policies would, in practice, affirm and promote formal equality of opportunity for women in the workplace and in public life, while at the same time respecting the importance of family commitment and obligation.

This conclusion implies that cultural problems require primarily cultural, not political, solutions. Controversies over gender differences are, as a rule, simply too complex and too important to be settled through legislation or political campaigns. Instead, we must turn to the institutions of civil society—the family itself, the church, the local community—to direct us in the important task of naming gender differences, affirming familial dependencies, and reasserting the permanent and binding character of relationships within the family.

Moreover, we detect some signs—some reasons for hope—that the United States in the 1990s will substantially revise its currently dominant elite stories of man and woman. We sense a culture that is now acknowledging the limits and costs of expressive individualism as a reigning norm. We sense, even within elite discourse, the beginning of a renewed appreciation of differences and mutual dependencies between men and women. We anticipate, in short, what might be termed a “new familism”—a cultural tilt toward improving the ecology of family life in the 1990s.

For example, recent scholarship on the evolution of gender roles during the life cycle finds a popular echo today—both in the declining popularity of the “superwoman” model and, concomitantly, in the growing popularity among women of “sequencing” job and family responsibilities.

Looking at contemporary U.S. culture, sociologist David Popenoe finds a new realism about family matters:

The gender-role debate is turning more in the direction of frankly discussing gender differences. In view of the new work roles of women, many men are becoming more actively involved in childrearing. A growing number of women have begun to rethink their lives and their careers along lines different from men, with a new interest in sequencing work and family pursuits that enables them to spend more time with very young children.

The 1990 Yankelovich Monitor, an annual survey of social values and consumer attitudes, finds a “major

shift away from work and more toward home,” according to Peter Stisser, a Yankelovich vice president and *Monitor* analyst. Moreover, the currently large number of childbirths in our society—over four million this past year, more than any year in American history—suggests that a large proportion of the baby boom generation will be experiencing the “parental emergency” at roughly the same time over the coming decade. This demographic event, with its myriad social and cultural ripple effects, may well lead to an upturn in parental altruism within the society and to a renewed commitment to family well-being.

We are essentially pessimistic about the state’s ability to define and enforce gender roles and identities. At the same time, we are optimistic about our cultural capacity in the years ahead to renew the language of difference and dependency in our public discourse about man and woman—to leave behind a story that is impoverished and anemic and to refashion for our time a story of a common life for man and woman that promotes the accomplishment and happiness of each. F

Not a Poem

Old people can't write poetry.
Only those who think and live and feel
and praise and swear and fight and love
and give birth to babies can give birth to poems.

Not old people. No dear old lady living in
retirement with a shawl around her shoulders, living
among others with shawls around their shoulders,
waiting for the mailman, the cleaning lady, the paper boy,
the maintenance man, the excursion to the Mall,
the visitor from out of the past, writes poetry. Why not?

Because people say so. Those who carry the world
on their shoulders, and bring flowers and words of cheer
and advice to little old ladies and gentlemen say so.
They are young or at least not yet old,
and could write poetry if they wanted to. They know.

We laugh and we agree.
After all, Dear Old Folks like us are Senior Citizens
who should be respected for our years
and given a Discount.
But we can't write Poetry. That's a known fact.

Ruth Wells

The Economics of Human Freedom

John Paul II

Editors' Note: The following is a condensation of Centesimus Annus ("The Hundredth Year"), Pope John Paul II's ninth encyclical. Words added for continuity are in square brackets.

1. The Centenary of the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* ["New Things"] by my predecessor Leo XIII is of great importance for the present history of the Church and for my own Pontificate. I wish to satisfy the debt of gratitude that the whole Church owes to this great Pope and his "immortal document." I also mean to show that *the vital energies* rising from that root have not been spent with the passing of the years, but rather *have increased even more*.

2. [This occasion] honors also those Encyclicals and other documents of my Predecessors that have helped to make *Rerum Novarum* live in history, thus constituting what would come to be called the Church's "social doctrine," "social teaching" or even "social magisterium."

3. I propose a "rereading" of Pope Leo's Encyclical by issuing an invitation to "look back" at the text itself, but also to "look around" at the "new things" that surround us, very different from the "new things" at the final decade of the last century. Finally, it is an invitation to "look to the future" at a time when we can glimpse the third Millennium of the Christian era, so filled with uncertainties but also with promises. A rereading of this kind confirms *the permanent value of such teaching*, but also manifests *the true meaning of the Church's Tradition*, which, being ever living and vital, builds upon the foundation laid by our fathers in the faith.

The Lord compares the scribe to "a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old" (Matt. 13:52). The treasure is the Church's Tradition, which contains "what is old" and enables

us to interpret the "new things" in the midst of which the life of the Church and the world unfolds. Millions of people, spurred on by the social Magisterium, have sought to make that teaching the inspiration for their involvement in the world. [They] represent a *great movement for the defense of the human person* and the safeguarding of human dignity, [and have] contributed to the building up of a more just society, or at least to the curbing of injustice.

The present Encyclical involves the exercise of [the Church's] teaching authority. But pastoral solicitude also prompts me to propose *an analysis of some events of recent history*. Such an analysis is not meant to pass definitive judgments since this does not fall *per se* within the Magisterium's specific domain.

I. CHARACTERISTICS OF *RERUM NOVARUM*

4. Towards the end of the last century the Church faced a historical process that was reaching a critical point. In politics, the result of these changes was a *new conception of society and of the State*, and consequently *of authority itself*. A traditional society was passing away and another was [emerging]. In economics, a *new form of property* had appeared—capital; and a *new form of labor*—labor for wages, characterized by high rates of production that lacked due regard for sex, age, or family situation, and was determined solely by efficiency, with a view to increasing profits.

Labor became a commodity freely bought and sold on the market, its price determined by the law of supply and demand, without taking into account the minimum required for the support of the individual and his family. Moreover, the worker was not even sure of being able to sell "his own commodity," continually threatened as he was by unemployment. The result of this transformation was a society "divided into two

classes, separated by a deep chasm." At the same time, another conception of property and economic life was beginning to appear in an organized and often violent form, one that implied a new political and social structure.

At the height of this clash, fanned by ideals that were then called "socialist," Pope Leo intervened with a document dealing with the "condition of the workers." [Papal teaching] called attention to the essential bond between human freedom and truth, so that freedom that refused to be bound to the truth would fall into arbitrariness and end up submitting itself to the vilest of passions, to the point of self-destruction. Indeed, what is the origin of all the evils to which *Rerum Novarum* wished to respond if not a kind of freedom that cuts itself off from the truth about man?

5. The "new things" [that the Pope addressed] were anything but positive. The Church was confronted, as was the civil community, by a society that was torn by a conflict all the more harsh and inhumane because it knew no rule or regulation. It was *the conflict between capital and labor*. The Pope's intention was certainly to restore peace, and the reader cannot fail to note his severe condemnation of the class struggle. However, the Pope was very much aware that *peace is built on the foundation of justice*.

The Church has something to say about [such] specific human situations. She formulates a genuine doctrine, a *corpus* that enables her to analyze social realities, to make judgments about them, and to indicate directions for the just resolution of problems. In Pope Leo's time such a concept of the Church's right and duty was far from being commonly admitted. [His] approach in publishing *Rerum Novarum* gave the Church "citizenship status," as it were, amid the changing realities of public life. Her social doctrine pertains to the Church's evangelizing mission, and is an essential part of the Christian message.

The "new evangelization" which the modern world urgently needs must include a *proclamation of the Church's social doctrine*. This doctrine indicates the right way to respond to the great challenges of today when ideologies are being increasingly discredited. We repeat that there can be *no genuine solution of the "social question" apart from the Gospel*. In the Gospel we find the context for proper moral perspective on the "new things."

6. Pope Leo affirmed the fundamental rights of workers. Indeed, the key to reading the Encyclical is the *dignity of the worker* as such, and [therefore] the *dignity of work*. Work belongs to the vocation of every person; indeed, man expresses and fulfils himself by working. Another important principle is that of the *right to "private property"*. Private property is not an absolute value. [There are] necessary complementary principles, such as the *universal destination of the earth's goods*. The type of private property that Leo mainly considers is land ownership. [But the same

principles apply] in the face of the changes we are witnessing in systems formerly dominated by collective ownership of the means of production, as well in the face of the increasing instances of poverty or, more precisely, of hindrances to private ownership in many parts of the world.

7. *Rerum Novarum* affirms *other rights* as inalienable and proper to the human person. Prominent among these is the "natural human right" to form private associations. This means above all *the right to establish professional associations* of employers and workers, or of workers alone, and the establishment of what are commonly called trade unions. The right of association is a natural right of the human being, which therefore precedes his or her incorporation into political society. The Encyclical also affirms the right to the "limitation of working hours," the right to legitimate rest, and the right of children and women to be treated differently with regard to the type and duration of work.

8. The Pope adds *another right* that the worker has as a person, the right to a "just wage." If work *as something personal* belongs to the sphere of the individual's free use of his own abilities and energy, *as something necessary* it is governed by the obligation to ensure "the preservation of life." "It necessarily follows," the Pope concludes, "that every individual has a natural right to procure what is required to live, and the poor can procure that in no other way than by what they can earn through their work." A workman's wages should be sufficient to enable him to support himself, his wife, and his children. The Pope attributed to the "public authority" the "strict duty" of providing properly for the welfare of the workers, because a failure to do so violates justice; indeed, he did not hesitate to speak of "distributive justice."

9. Leo XIII adds another right, namely the right to discharge freely one's religious duties. The general opinion, even in his day, [was] that such questions pertained exclusively to an individual's private life. He affirms the need for Sunday rest so that people [may offer] the worship they owe to Almighty God. [We] see in this statement a springboard for the principle of the right to religious freedom, which was to become the subject of many solemn *International Declarations* as well as of the Second Vatican Council's *Declaration* and of my own repeated teaching.

10. Another aspect is the relationship between the State and its citizens. *Rerum Novarum* criticizes two social and economic systems: socialism and liberalism. "When there is question of defending the rights of individuals, the defenseless and the poor have a claim to special consideration. The richer class has many ways of shielding itself, and stands less in need of help from the State." [Such] passages [speak today to] the new forms of poverty in the world.

The principle of solidarity, both within each nation and in the international order, is clearly seen to be one of the fundamental principles of the Christian

view of social and political organization. Leo uses the term “friendship,” [while] Pius XI refers to it as “social charity,” and Paul VI speaks of a “civilization of love.”

11. Rereading the Encyclical in the light of contemporary realities enables us to appreciate *the Church's constant concern for and dedication to* categories of people who are especially beloved to the Lord Jesus. [There is] the continuity within the Church of the “preferential option for the poor.” The Encyclical is thus [about] the poor and the terrible conditions to which the new and often violent process of industrialization had reduced great multitudes of people. Today, in many parts of the world, similar processes of economic, social, and political transformation are creating the same evils.

The State has the duty of ensuring that every sector of social life, not excluding the economic one, contributes to achieving the common good, while respecting the rightful autonomy of each sector. Pope Leo did not expect the State to solve every social problem. On the contrary, he frequently insists on necessary limits to the State's intervention and on its instrumental character, inasmuch as the individual, the family, and society are prior to the State, and inasmuch as the State exists in order to protect their rights and not stifle them. The guiding principle of all the Church's social doctrine is a *correct view of the human person*. God has imprinted his own image and likeness on man (Gen. 1:26).

II. TOWARDS THE “NEW THINGS” OF TODAY

12. The prognosis of *Rerum Novarum* has proved to be surprisingly accurate. This is especially confirmed by the events near the end of 1989 and at the beginning of 1990. Pope Leo foresaw the negative consequences of the social order proposed by “socialism,” which at that time was still only a social philosophy and not yet a fully structured movement. He correctly judged the danger posed to the masses by the attractive presentation of this simple and radical solution to the “question of the working class.”

[He demonstrated] great clarity, first, in perceiving, in all its harshness, the actual condition of the working class; second, in recognizing the evil of a solution [that] was in reality detrimental to the very people whom it was meant to help. The remedy would prove worse than the sickness. By defining socialism as the suppression of private property, Leo arrived at the crux of the problem. His words deserve to be reread: “Were the contentions [of the socialists] carried into effect, the working man himself would be among the first to suffer. They are moreover emphatically unjust, for they would rob the lawful possessor, distort the functions of the State, and create utter confusion in the community.” The evils caused by what would later be called “Real Socialism” could not be better expressed.

13. The fundamental error of socialism is anthro-

pological. Socialism considers the individual simply as an element, so that the good of the individual is completely subordinated to the socio-economic mechanism. Socialism maintains that the good of the individual can be realized without reference to his free choice in the face of good or evil. A person who is deprived of something he can call “his own,” and of earning a living through his own initiative, comes to depend on the social machine and those who control it.

In the Christian vision, the social nature of man is not completely fulfilled in the State but is realized in various intermediary groups, beginning with the family and including economic, social, political, and cultural groups that stem from human nature itself and have their own autonomy, always with a view to the common good. This “subjectivity” of society, together with the subjectivity of the individual, was cancelled out by “Real Socialism.”

The first cause of socialism's mistaken concept of the person is atheism. It is by responding to the call of God contained in the being of things that man becomes aware of his transcendent dignity. This response constitutes the apex of his humanity, and no social mechanism or collective subject can substitute for it. Such atheism is also closely connected with the rationalism of the Enlightenment, which views human and social reality in a mechanistic way.

14. From this atheistic source, socialism derives the means of action [that it calls] class struggle. The Church recognizes the positive role of conflict when it takes the form of a “struggle for justice.” What is condemned in class struggle is the idea that conflict is not restrained by ethical or juridical considerations or by respect for the dignity of others (and consequently of oneself). Conflict becomes “total war.” Marxist class struggle and militarism have the same root, namely, atheism and contempt for the human person, which place the principle of force above that of reason and law.

15. The State's task is to determine the juridical framework within which economic affairs are to be conducted, and thus to safeguard the prerequisites of a free economy, which presumes a certain equality between the parties, such that one party is not so powerful as to reduce the other to subservience. Society and the State assume responsibility for protecting the worker from unemployment. Historically, this happens in two converging ways: either through policies [of] balanced economic growth and full employment, or through unemployment insurance and retraining that ensures a smooth transfer of workers from crisis sectors to those in expansion.

The society and the State must ensure wage levels adequate for the worker and his family, including a certain amount for savings. Improving workers' training will [make them] more skilled and productive. [Measures are needed to protect] especially the most vulnerable workers—immigrants and those on the

margins of society. The role of trade unions in negotiating salaries and working conditions is decisive. Trade unions serve the development of an authentic culture of work and help workers to share in a fully human way in the life of their place of employment. The State must contribute to these goals both directly and indirectly. Indirectly and according to the *principle of subsidiarity*, by creating conditions for the free exercise of economic activity. Directly and according to the *principle of solidarity*, by defending the weakest and ensuring support for the unemployed.

The Church's social teaching had far-reaching influence in the numerous reforms introduced in the areas of social security, pensions, health insurance, and [creating a] framework of greater respect for the rights of workers.

16. *The role of the workers' movement* was important in these reforms. Later, this movement was dominated to a certain extent by the Marxist ideology that *Rerum Novarum* criticized. The reforms were also a result of *an open process by which society organized itself* through instruments of solidarity that sustained economic growth more respectful of the person. We thank God that the Encyclical was not without an echo in human hearts and indeed led to a generous response on the practical level.

17. The Encyclical points to the error [of] an understanding of freedom that detaches it from obedience to the truth, and consequently from the duty to respect the rights of others. This error had extreme consequences in the wars that ravaged Europe and the world between 1914 and 1945. There was no hesitation to violate sacred human rights, with the extermination of entire peoples and social groups. Here we recall the Jewish people in particular, whose terrible fate has become a symbol of the aberration of which man is capable when he turns against God.

18. Since 1945, there has been in Europe and the world a situation of non-war rather than genuine peace. Half of the continent fell under the domination of a Communist dictatorship, while the other half organized itself in defence against this threat. Many peoples were [contained] within the suffocating boundaries of an empire [that attempted] to destroy their historical memory and the centuries-old roots of their culture. An insane arms race swallowed up the resources needed for development. An ideology, a perversion of authentic philosophy, was called upon to provide doctrinal justification for [this] new war. We must repudiate the idea that the effort to destroy the enemy, confrontation, and war itself are factors of historical progress. [When we do that] the concepts of "total war" and "class struggle" must necessarily be called into question.

19. After World War II, [we saw] the spread of Communist totalitarianism over more than half of Europe and other parts of the world. The war, which should have reestablished freedom and restored the right of nations, [did not] attain these goals. Following

the war, we see in some countries an effort to rebuild a democratic society inspired by social justice. Such attempts preserve free market mechanisms, ensuring, by means of a stable currency and the harmony of social relations, the conditions for economic growth in which people through their own work can build a better future for themselves and their families.

[Other countries] set up systems of "national security" aimed at controlling the whole of society in order to make Marxist infiltration impossible. They run the grave risk of destroying the freedom and values of the person, the very things for whose sake it is necessary to oppose Communism. Another response, practical in nature, is represented by the affluent society or the consumer society. It seeks to defeat Marxism on the level of pure materialism by showing how a free-market society can [better satisfy] material needs. Insofar as [such a society] denies morality, law, culture, and religion, it agrees with Marxism by reducing man to the sphere of economics and the satisfaction of material needs.

20. After "decolonization," many countries gained State sovereignty but find themselves merely at the beginning of the journey toward genuine independence. Decisive sectors of the economy and political life itself are controlled by foreign powers. Also lacking is a class of competent professional people capable of running the State and managing the economy in an honest and just way. Many think that Marxism offers a shortcut for building the nation and the State, [and] thus Marxist-Leninist concepts mingle with militarism and popular traditions in many variants of socialism.

21. After World War II, there arose a more lively sense of human rights [expressed] in *International Documents*. The focal point of this evolution has been the United Nations Organization. While we note this with satisfaction, policies of aid for development have not always been positive. Moreover, the United Nations has not yet established alternatives to war for the resolution of international conflicts. This seems to be the most urgent problem that the international community has yet to resolve.

III. THE YEAR 1989

22. In the course of the 80s, certain oppressive regimes fell one by one in some countries of Latin America and also of Africa and Asia. A decisive contribution was made by *the Church's commitment to defend and promote human rights*. In situations [under Communist] ideology, the Church affirmed forcefully that every individual bears the image of God and therefore deserves respect. From this process, new forms of democracy have emerged that offer hope for change in [societies] weighed down by injustices and resentments, and by a heavily damaged economy and serious social conflicts. I thank God for the often heroic witness borne in such circumstances by many Pastors,

entire Christian communities, individual members of the faithful, and other people of good will.

23. The decisive factor in the fall of oppressive regimes was the violation of the rights of workers. The crisis of systems claiming to express the dictatorship of the working class began with the great upheaval in Poland in the name of solidarity. On the basis of a hard, lived experience of oppression, it was they who recovered the principles of the Church's social doctrine. The fall of this empire was accomplished almost everywhere by means of peaceful protest, using the weapons of truth and justice. It seemed that the order resulting from the war and sanctioned by the *Yalta Agreements* could only be overturned by war. Instead, it has been overcome by people who [found] effective ways of bearing witness to the truth. This disarmed the adversary, since violence always needs to justify itself through deceit.

24. The second factor in the crisis was the inefficiency of the economic system, which is not simply a technical problem but a consequence of the violation of the human rights to private initiative, to ownership of property, and to freedom in the economic sector. To this must be added the cultural and national dimensions; it is not possible to understand man on the basis of economics alone. Man is understood within the sphere of culture through his language, history, and the position he takes towards the fundamental events of life, such as birth, love, work, and death. At the heart of every culture lies the attitude man takes to the greatest mystery: the mystery of God. The true cause of the new developments was the spiritual void brought about by atheism. Marxism had promised to uproot the need for God from the human heart, but it is not possible to succeed in this without throwing the heart into turmoil.

25. The events of 1989 are a warning to those who, in the name of political realism, wish to banish law and morality from the political arena. Only by trust in the Lord of history is man able to accomplish the miracle of peace and to discern the often narrow path between the cowardice that gives in to evil and the violence that, under the illusion of fighting evil, only makes it worse. [We can see] that not only is it ethically wrong to disregard human nature, which is made for freedom, but in practice it is impossible to do so.

Moreover, man, who was created for freedom, bears within himself the wound of original sin. Man tends toward good, but he is also capable of evil. He can transcend his immediate interest and still remain bound to it. The social order will be the more stable the more it takes this fact into account and does not place in opposition personal interest and the interests of society as a whole, but rather seeks to bring them into fruitful harmony. Where self-interest is suppressed, it is replaced by a burdensome system of bureaucratic control that dries up the wellsprings of initiative and creativity. [There is no] perfect social organization that makes evil impossible. No political

society can ever be confused with the Kingdom of God. God alone can separate the subjects of the Kingdom from the subjects of the Evil One, and this judgment will take place at the end of time. By presuming to anticipate [that] judgment, man puts himself in the place of God and sets himself against the patience of God.

26. The events of 1989 [involved] *an encounter between the Church and the workers' movement*. For about a century, the workers' movement had fallen in part under the dominance of Marxism. The crisis of Marxism does not rid the world of the injustice and oppression that Marxism itself exploited. To those searching for a new and authentic theory and praxis of liberation, the Church offers her social doctrine, her teaching about the person redeemed in Christ, and her concrete commitment and material assistance in the struggle against marginalization and suffering.

In the recent past, many believers sincerely sought an impossible compromise between Marxism and Christianity. Beyond all that was short-lived in these attempts, circumstances are leading to an authentic theology of integral human liberation. [In this way], the events of 1989 are important also for countries of the Third World.

27. In Europe, many injustices were committed during and prior to the years in which Communism dominated; much hatred and ill-will have accumulated. It is hoped that all people will grow in the spirit of peace and forgiveness. Between nations, international structures are needed to arbitrate conflicts, especially in Europe, where nations are united in a bond of common culture and an age-old history. A great effort is needed to rebuild morally and economically the countries that have abandoned Communism.

28. For some countries of Europe, the real postwar period is just beginning. They need the help of Western Europe. They find themselves in [such need] not as a result of free choice or mistakes that were made, but as a consequence of tragic historical events that were violently imposed on them. Assistance, especially from countries of Europe that bear responsibility for that history, represents a debt in justice. It is also in the interest of Europe as a whole.

This must not lead, however, to a slackening of efforts to assist the countries of the Third World. What is called for is a special effort to mobilize resources, which are not lacking in the world, for the purpose of economic growth and common development. Enormous resources can be made available by the disarmament of huge military machines. It is above all necessary to abandon a mentality in which the poor are considered a burden, as irksome intruders trying to consume what others produce. The advancement of the poor constitutes a great opportunity for the moral, cultural, and even economic growth of all humanity.

29. Development is not only a question of raising all peoples to the level currently enjoyed by the richest

countries but of building a more decent life [appropriate to] man's vocation from God. The apex of development is the exercise of the right and duty to seek God, to know him and to live in accordance with that knowledge. Total recognition must be given to *the rights of human conscience*, which is bound only to the truth, both natural and revealed. The recognition of these rights is the primary foundation of every authentically free political order. In some countries, religious fundamentalism denies to citizens of [other] faiths the full exercise of their civil and religious rights. No authentic progress is possible without respect for the right to know the truth and live according to that truth.

IV. PRIVATE PROPERTY AND THE UNIVERSAL DESTINATION OF MATERIAL GOODS

30. The natural right to private property, which is fundamental for the autonomy and development of the person, has always been defended by the Church. [But] the possession of material goods is not an absolute right. The "use" of goods, while marked by freedom, is subordinated to their original common destination as well as to the will of Christ.

31. The original source of all that is good and sustains human life is the very act of God who created [all] and gave the earth to man to have dominion over it by his work and enjoy its fruits (Gen. 1:28). This is *the foundation of the universal destination of the earth's goods*. It is through work that man, using his intelligence and exercising his freedom, dominates the earth and makes it a fitting home. This is *the origin of individual property*. Individuals [must] not hinder others from having their own part of God's gift; indeed, they must cooperate so that together all can dominate the earth.

At one time, *the natural fruitfulness of the earth* was the primary factor of wealth. In our time, *the role of human work* is increasingly the productive factor both of nonmaterial and material wealth. Also, more than ever work is *work with others* and *work for others*; it is a matter of doing something for someone else.

32. In our time, another form of ownership is becoming no less important than land: *the possession of know-how, technology, and skill*. The wealth of the industrialized nations is based much more on this kind of ownership than on natural resources. A person produces something so that others may use it after they have paid a just price, mutually agreed upon through free bargaining. The ability to foresee both the needs of others and the factors [best fit] to satisfying those needs is another source of wealth in modern society. In this way, the role of disciplined and creative *human work* and *initiative and entrepreneurial ability* become increasingly decisive.

Besides the earth, man's principal resource is *man himself*. Disciplined work in collaboration with others

creates the ever more extensive *working communities* that transform man's natural and human environments. Important virtues are involved in this process, such as diligence, industriousness, prudence in undertaking reasonable risks, reliability and fidelity in interpersonal relationships, as well as courage in carrying out decisions that are difficult and painful but necessary, both for the overall working of a business and in meeting possible setbacks.

33. [There are] risks and problems connected with this process. Many people do not have the means enabling them to take their place within a productive system. Thus, if not actually exploited, they are to a great extent marginalized; economic development takes place over their heads, so to speak. Allured by the dazzle of an opulence beyond their reach, these people crowd the cities of the Third World without the possibility of becoming integrated. Their dignity is not acknowledged and there are even attempts to eliminate them from history through coercive forms of demographic control.

Many others, while not completely marginalized, live in situations in which the rules of the earliest period of capitalism still flourish. In other cases the land is still the central element in the economic process, but those who cultivate it are excluded from ownership and reduced to a state of quasi-servitude. In these cases, it is still possible to speak of inhuman exploitation. In fact, for the poor, to the lack of material goods has been added a lack of knowledge and training that prevents them from escaping their state of humiliating subjection.

Countries isolating themselves from the world market have suffered stagnation, while the countries that experienced development take part in economic activities at the international level. The chief problem is that of gaining fair access to the international market. [At the same time,] aspects typical of the Third World also appear in developed countries, where [market] transformation devalues skills and expertise, thus requiring continual retraining. Those who fail to keep up with the times can easily be marginalized.

34. It would appear that *the free market* is the most efficient instrument for utilizing resources and effectively responding to needs. But there are many human needs that find no place on the market. It is a strict duty of justice and truth not to allow fundamental human needs to remain unsatisfied. It is also necessary to help needy people acquire expertise, to enter the circle of exchange, and to develop their skills to make the best use of their capacities and resources. Prior to the logic of a fair exchange of goods, there exists *something that is due to man because he is man*, by reason of his lofty dignity.

35. In [one] sense, it is right to speak of a struggle against an economic system, if that system upholds the absolute predominance of capital, the possession of the means of production and of the land, in contrast to the free and personal nature of human work. The

alternative is not the socialist system, which in fact turns out to be State capitalism, but rather *a society of free work, of enterprise, and of participation*.

The Church acknowledges the legitimate *role of profit* as an indication that a business is functioning well. But profitability is not the only indicator of a firm's condition. It is possible for the financial accounts to be in order, and yet for the people—who are the firm's most valuable asset—to be humiliated and their dignity offended. This is morally inadmissible [and] will eventually have negative repercussions on the firm's economic efficiency. The purpose of a business firm is to be a *community of persons* endeavoring to satisfy basic needs at the service of the whole of society.

It is unacceptable to say that the defeat of "Real Socialism" leaves [the present operation of capitalism] as the only model of economic organization. It is necessary to break down barriers and monopolies in the international community. Stronger nations must offer weaker ones opportunities for taking their place in international life, and the latter must learn how to use these opportunities by making the necessary efforts and sacrifices, by ensuring political and economic stability, by the improvement of workers' skills, and [by] the training of competent business leaders conscious of their responsibilities.

Positive efforts along these lines are affected by the unsolved problem of the foreign debt of the poorer countries. The principle that debts must be paid is certainly just. However, it is not right to demand payment at the price of unbearable sacrifices. In such cases it is necessary to find—as in fact is partly happening—ways to lighten, defer, or even cancel the debt.

36. In the more advanced economies, the problem is also one of responding to a *demand for quality*: the quality of goods and services, the quality of the environment, and of life in general. A given culture reveals its understanding of life through the choices it makes in production and consumption. Here *the phenomenon of consumerism* arises. Of itself, an economic system does not possess criteria for correctly distinguishing new and higher forms of satisfying needs from artificial new needs that hinder the formation of a mature personality. *Thus a great deal of educational and cultural work* is urgently needed, including the education of consumers in the responsible use of their power of choice. A striking example of artificial consumption contrary to the health and dignity of the human person is the widespread use of drugs. Drugs, pornography, and other forms of consumerism exploit the frailty of the weak.

It is not wrong to want to live better; what is wrong is a style of life presumed to be better when directed towards "having" rather than "being." Even the decision to invest in one place rather than another, in one productive sector rather than another, is always *a moral and cultural choice*. The decision to invest,

that is, to offer people an opportunity to make good use of their own labor, is also determined by an attitude of human sympathy and trust in Providence that reveals the human quality of the person making such decisions.

37. Closely connected to consumerism and equally worrying is *the ecological question*. Desiring to have and to enjoy rather than to be and to grow, man consumes the earth and his own life in an excessive and disordered way. Man thinks that he can make arbitrary use of the earth, as though it did not have its own prior God-given purpose, which man can develop but must not betray. Instead of being a cooperator with God in creation, man sets himself in place of God, provoking a rebellion on the part of nature, which is more tyrannized than governed by him.

38. Yet more serious is the destruction of the *human environment*. People are rightly worried about the extinction of animal species, but too little effort is made to *safeguard the moral conditions for an authentic "human ecology"*. God gave the earth to man, but man too is God's gift to man. Here attention should be given a "social ecology" of work.

39. The first and fundamental structure for "human ecology" is *the family*, in which man receives his first ideas about truth and goodness and learns what it means to love and be loved, and thus what it means to be a person. But it often happens that people are discouraged from creating the proper conditions for human reproduction and are led to consider their lives as a series of sensations to be experienced rather than as a work to be accomplished.

The result is a lack of freedom that causes a person to reject a commitment to enter into a stable relationship and to bring children into the world, or that leads people to consider children as one of the many "things" that an individual can have or not have, and that compete with other possibilities. The family is indeed sacred. In the face of the so-called culture of death, the family is the heart of the culture of life. Human ingenuity seems directed more towards limiting or destroying the sources of life—including recourse to abortion—than towards defending and opening up the possibilities of life. [I have] denounced systematic anti-childbearing campaigns that, on the basis of a distorted view of the demographic problem, subject people to a new form of oppression.

These criticisms are directed not so much against an economic system as against an ethical and cultural system. The economy is only one aspect of the whole of human activity. If material goods become a society's only value, the reason is to be found not so much in the economic system itself as in the fact that the entire socio-cultural system, by ignoring the ethical and religious dimension, has been weakened.

40. It is the task of the State to preserve common goods that cannot be safeguarded simply by market forces. In the time of primitive capitalism, the State

had the duty of defending the basic rights of workers, and so now, with the new capitalism, the State and all of society have the duty of *defending those collective goods* that constitute the framework for the legitimate pursuit of personal goals. There are important human needs that cannot be satisfied by market mechanisms. There are goods that by their very nature cannot and must not be bought or sold. [Forgetting this] carries the risk of an "idolatry" of the market.

41. Marxism affirms that only in a collective society can alienation be eliminated. However, historical experience has sadly demonstrated that collectivism increases alienation, adding to it a lack of basic necessities. Alienation—and the loss of the authentic meaning of life—is a reality in Western societies too. In consumerism people are ensnared in a web of false and superficial gratifications. Alienation is found in work when it is organized so as to ensure maximum profits with no concern for the worker.

The gift [of authentic life] is made possible by the person's "capacity for transcendence." Man cannot give himself to a purely human plan for reality, to an abstract ideal or to a false utopia. A man is alienated if he refuses to transcend himself in self-giving and in the formation of human community oriented toward his final destiny, which is God. A society is alienated if it makes it more difficult to offer this gift of self. Exploitation, at least in the forms analyzed by Karl Marx, has been overcome in Western society. Alienation, however, exists when people use one another, ignoring *obedience to the truth* about God and man, which obedience is the first condition of freedom.

42. Can it perhaps be said that, after the failure of Communism, capitalism is the victorious social system, and that capitalism should be the goal of the countries now making efforts to rebuild their economy and society? Is this the model that ought to be proposed to the countries of the Third World?

If by "capitalism" is meant an economic system that recognizes the fundamental and positive role of business, the market, private property, and the resulting responsibility for the means of production, as well as free human creativity in the economic sector, then the answer is certainly in the affirmative, [although it is] perhaps more appropriate to speak of a "business economy," "market economy," or simply "free economy." If by "capitalism" is meant a system in which freedom in the economic sector is not circumscribed within a strong juridical framework that places it at the service of human freedom in its totality, and that sees it as a particular aspect of that freedom, the core of which is ethical and religious, then the reply is certainly negative.

Vast multitudes live in conditions of great material and moral poverty. The collapse of Communism removes an obstacle to facing these problems, but it is not enough to bring about their solution. There is a risk that a radical capitalistic ideology could refuse

even to consider these problems, blindly entrusting their solution to market forces.

43. The Church offers her social teaching as an *indispensable and ideal orientation* that recognizes the positive value of the market and of enterprise when [they are] oriented towards the common good. In the light of today's "new things" we have reread *the relationship between individual or private property and the universal destination of material wealth*. Man works in order to provide for his family, his community, his nation, and ultimately all humanity. He collaborates in the work of his fellow employees, of suppliers, and in the customers' use of goods in a progressively expanding chain of solidarity. Just as the person fully realizes himself in the free gift of self, so too ownership morally justifies itself in the creation of opportunities and human growth for all.

V. STATE AND CULTURE

44. *Rerum Novarum* presents the organization of society according to the three powers—legislative, executive, and judicial. It is preferable that each power be balanced by [the] others. This is the "rule of law" in which the law is sovereign and not the arbitrary will of individuals. This concept has been opposed by Marxist-Leninist totalitarianism, which maintains that some people are exempt from error and can therefore exercise absolute power. The root of totalitarianism is the denial of the transcendent dignity of the human person who, as the visible image of the invisible God, is by his very nature the subject of rights that no one may violate.

45. Totalitarianism also involves a rejection of the Church. The State sets itself above all values [and] cannot tolerate the affirmation of an *objective criterion of good and evil* beyond the will of those in power. The State tends to absorb within itself the nation, society, the family, religious groups, and individuals themselves. In defending her own freedom, the Church is also defending the human person, who must obey God rather than men (cf. Acts 5:29).

46. The Church values the democratic system [that] ensures the participation of citizens in making political choices, guarantees to the governed the possibility of electing and holding accountable those who govern and of replacing them through peaceful means when appropriate. Nowadays, there is a tendency to claim that agnosticism and skeptical relativism are the philosophy and attitude that correspond to democratic forms of political life. It must be observed [however] that if there is no ultimate truth to direct political activity, then ideas can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. A democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism.

Christian truth does not claim the right to impose on others [one] concept of what is true and good. Since it is not an ideology, the Christian faith does not imprison changing socio-political realities in a rigid

schema. Human life is realized in history in conditions that are diverse and imperfect. Further, reaffirming the transcendent dignity of the person, the Church's method is always that of respect for freedom. While paying heed to every fragment of truth he encounters [elsewhere], the Christian will not fail to affirm in dialogue with others all that his faith and the correct use of reason have enabled him to understand.

47. Today we are witnessing a predominance of the democratic ideal, together with lively attention to human rights. Those rights [are] the solid foundation of democracy. Among the most important is the right to life, an integral part of which is the right of the child to develop in the mother's womb from the moment of conception. The source and synthesis of [all such rights] is religious freedom, the right to live in conformity with one's transcendent dignity as a person. The Church respects *the legitimate autonomy of the democratic order* and is not entitled to express preferences for this or that institutional or constitutional solution. Her contribution to the political order is her vision of the dignity of the person revealed in all its fullness in the mystery of the Incarnate Word.

48. The market economy cannot be conducted in an institutional, juridical, or political vacuum. The role of the State is to guarantee individual freedom and private property, as well as a stable currency and efficient public services. The State also oversees the exercise of human rights in the economic sector. However, primary responsibility in this area belongs not to the State but to individuals and to the groups and associations that make up society. The State could not directly ensure the right to work for all its citizens unless it controlled every aspect of economic life and restricted the free initiative of individuals. The State has a duty to sustain business activities by creating conditions that will ensure job opportunities.

The State has the right to intervene when monopolies create obstacles to development. In exceptional circumstances the State can also exercise a *substitute function*, when social or business sectors are too weak or just getting underway. Such supplementary interventions must be as brief as possible, so as to avoid removing permanently from society and business the functions that are properly theirs, and so as to avoid enlarging excessively the sphere of State intervention to the detriment of both economic and civil freedom.

In recent years, such intervention has vastly expanded, creating the "Welfare State." Excesses and abuses have provoked very harsh criticisms of the Welfare State, dubbed the "Social Assistance State." Malfunctions in the Social Assistance State result [from] an inadequate understanding of the tasks proper to the State. *The principle of subsidiarity* must be respected: a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to coordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society,

always with a view to the common good. Needs are best understood and satisfied by people who are closest to them, and who act as neighbors to those in need.

49. The Church has always been present and active among the needy. Active charity has never ceased to be practiced, and today it is showing a gratifying increase. Special mention must be made of *volunteer work*, which the Church favors and promotes. To overcome today's individualistic mentality we require *a concrete commitment to solidarity and charity*, beginning with the family. It is urgent to promote family policies for [among other tasks] looking after the elderly, so as to avoid distancing them from the family unit and in order to strengthen relations between generations. Apart from the family, other intermediate communities, communities [that function between] the State and the marketplace, exercise primary functions and give life to networks of solidarity.

50. From the open search for truth *the culture of a nation* derives its character. *Evangelization plays a role in the culture of the various nations*, sustaining culture in its progress to truth. When a culture becomes inward-looking and tries to perpetuate obsolete ways by rejecting any exchange with regard to the truth about man, it becomes sterile and is heading for decadence.

51. The first and most important [cultural] task is accomplished within man's heart. The way in which he builds his future depends on the understanding he has of himself and his destiny. It is on this level that *the Church's specific and decisive contribution to true culture* is to be found. The Church renders this service to human society *by preaching the truth* whereby the Son of God has saved mankind and united all people, making them responsible for one another. No one can say that he is not responsible for the well-being of his brother or sister (cf. Gen. 4:9, Luke 10:29-37, Matt. 25:31-46). Concern for one's neighbor is especially important in searching for alternatives to war in resolving international conflicts.

52. On the occasion of the recent tragic war in the Persian Gulf, I repeated the cry: "Never again war!" As in individual States a system of private vendetta and reprisal has given way to the rule of law, so too a similar step is now needed in the international community. Another name for peace is *development*. As there is a collective responsibility for avoiding war, so too there is a collective responsibility for promoting development. This is the [international] culture that is hoped for, one that fosters trust in the human potential of the poor, and in their ability to improve their condition through work. They need to be provided opportunities [through a] *concerted worldwide effort to promote development*, an effort that also involves [surrendering the advantages] of income and power enjoyed by the more developed economies.

VI. MAN IS THE WAY OF THE CHURCH

53. For a hundred years the Church has expressed her thinking [on] the social question, [but] not in order to recover former privileges or to impose her own vision. Her sole purpose has been *care and responsibility* for man, who has been entrusted to her by Christ himself. The horizon of the Church's wealth of doctrine is man in his concrete reality as sinful and righteous.

54. The human sciences and philosophy are helpful for interpreting *man's central place within society*. However, man's true identity is only fully revealed to him through faith, and it is from faith that the Church's social teaching begins. The Church's *social teaching* is itself a valid *instrument of evangelization*.

55. Christian anthropology is really a chapter of theology, and the Church's social doctrine [as I earlier wrote] "belongs to the field of theology and particularly of moral theology." The theological dimension is needed both for interpreting and solving present-day problems in society. This is true in contrast to both the "atheistic" solution and to permissive and consumerist solutions. On the eve of the third Millennium the Church continues to be "a sign and safeguard of the transcendence of the human person," walking together with man through history.

56. I wish this teaching to be applied in the countries that, following the collapse of "Real Socialism," are experiencing a serious lack of direction. The Western countries, in turn, run the risk of seeing this collapse as a one-sided victory of their own economic system, and thereby failing to make necessary corrections in that system. Third World countries experience more than ever the tragedy of underdevelopment.

57. The social message of the Gospel [is] not a theory but a basis and motivation for action. That message will gain credibility from the *witness of actions*. This awareness is also a source of the Church's preferential option for the poor, which is never exclusive or discriminatory toward other groups. This option is not limited to material poverty, [for] there are many other forms of poverty—not only economic but cultural and spiritual. In the West there are forms of poverty experienced by groups that live on the margins, by the elderly and the sick, by the victims of consumerism, by so many refugees and immigrants. In

developing countries tragic crises loom on the horizon.

58. Justice will never be attained unless people see in the poor person who is asking for help in order to survive not an annoyance or a burden but an opportunity for showing kindness and a chance for greater enrichment. It is not merely a matter of "giving from one's surplus," but of helping entire peoples that are presently excluded or marginalized to enter into the sphere of economic and human development. Today's "globalization" of the economy can create unusual opportunities for greater prosperity. In order to direct the economy to the common good, increased coordination among the more powerful countries is necessary, with international agencies [to assure that] the interests of the whole human family are equally represented.

59. For the demands of justice to be met, what is needed is *the gift of grace*. Grace in cooperation with human freedom constitutes that mysterious presence of God in history that is Providence.

60. Solving serious national and international problems is not just a matter of economic production or of juridical or social organization, but calls for ethical and religious values. There is hope that the many people who profess no religion will also contribute to providing the necessary ethical foundation. [But] the Christian Churches and world religions will have a preeminent role in preserving peace and in building a society worthy of man.

61. After World War II, the Church put the dignity of the person at the center of her social messages. As she has become more aware of the too many people living in the poverty of the developing countries, she feels obliged to denounce this [marginalization] with absolute frankness, although she knows that her call will not always win favor with everyone.

62. I again give thanks to Almighty God, who has granted his Church the light and strength to accompany humanity on its earthly journey toward its eternal destiny. In the third Millennium, too, the Church will be faithful *in making man's way her own*. It is Christ who made man's way his own, and who guides him, even when he is not aware of it.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 1 May, the Memorial of Saint Joseph the Worker, in the year 1991, the thirteenth of my Pontificate. ☐

Books In Review

The Paleo's Paleo

THE CONSERVATIVE CONSTITUTION.
By RUSSELL KIRK. *Regnery Gate-
way*. \$22.95. 241 pp.

Reviewed by James Nuechterlein

IN THE VARIOUS worlds of American conservatism, that most resistant to modernity—the world, one might say, of the Tory Harrumph—has long been presided over by Russell Kirk. It has very little to do with American reality, but for those of a reactionary bent who imagine themselves superior to that reality, it apparently provides a congenial home. In *The Conservative Constitution*, the author offers a typical Kirkian tour of that mental habitat.

Kirk's style is, as always, appropriate to the philosophy it sets forth: portentous, mannered, self-consciously archaic. Already on page 17 we find the inevitable reference to the "Permanent Things" (if Mr. Kirk has ever written anything without that phrase, I have not encountered it); throughout, we receive warnings against succumbing to "dogmata" ("dogmata," as distinguished from Permanent Things, being ideas of which the author does not approve); finally, in heroic attempt at self-parody, Kirk twice excuses himself from elaborating an argument with the languid note that "time runs on, runs on."

THE ideas in *The Conservative Constitution* are no less familiar than the prose, though perhaps they strain credulity rather more than is customary. As the title indicates, Kirk's topic is the American Constitution, which he improbably

interprets as a document in the spirit of Edmund Burke. (Kirk's original title for the book was *Edmund Burke and the Constitution of the United States*.) Presumably the Burke Mr. Kirk has in mind is not the one devoted wholeheartedly to institutions of the monarchy, an established church, and a hereditary aristocracy, or to ideas such as organicism, aversion to social and political equality, skepticism toward rapid social mobility, and reverence for antiquity.

To make his case, the author finds himself required largely to ignore James Madison—the Father of the Constitution—and virtually to read out of the American tradition Thomas Jefferson. Nor is one converted to Kirk's argument by many of the names he invokes to document Burke's centrality to constitutional development: the Federalists, John Randolph of Roanoke, and John C. Calhoun. It is no disparagement of any of them to note that, by and large, their ideas have not prevailed.

THIS IS NOT to deny Kirk's argument that the Constitution has served as a conservative bulwark in America—it has—or that Edmund Burke is a source of enduring wisdom who has much to teach Americans—he is and he does. But it is quite something else to suggest, as the author does, that Burke was more influential in the American founding than John Locke. Whether he *should* have been is another matter, but Mr. Kirk so aimlessly wanders from the one idea to the other that he appears not to notice the difference between them.

His favored form of disputation (beyond flat assertion) is demolition of straw men, as in "No, John Locke did not make the Glorious Revolution of 1688 or foreordain the Constitution of the United States." That, to put the point gently, is unserious argument. There is much in Lockean liberalism open to philosophical challenge, but it requires remarkable ingenuity to minimize as radically as Kirk tries to do its influence on

the founding generation (although even he, after much huffing and puffing to the contrary, finally has to concede its significance).

When he is not being implausibly contentious, Mr. Kirk has a number of sensible, if usually unremarkable, things to say about American constitutional development. He is a man of wide learning, and, precisely because he is so out of sympathy with so much that is commonplace in America, his observations, however eccentric, often bear attention.

THE irony in Kirk's position is that his own ideological "dogmata" blind him to the most promising prospect for a usable Burke in America. Burke is a traditionalist, but he recognizes that, within broad moral limits set by natural law, national traditions will legitimately vary according to the particularities of the nation's history. Applied to America, that means what Kirk cannot bring himself to face: the major tradition to be preserved is classical liberalism.

More specifically, it means adherence to the American regime of bourgeois democratic capitalism. For Kirk—scornful of bourgeois culture, skeptical toward democracy, dubious about capitalist morality—this will not do. It all smacks suspiciously of neoconservatism, about which Kirk, here as elsewhere, has absolutely nothing good to say.

Judging from his extended and appreciative comments on Orestes Brownson—not the youthful radical but the mature conservative—Mr. Kirk's preferred version of political economy appears to have its roots in premodern strains of Catholic social doctrine. People of that persuasion may fancy themselves as more in harmony with the Permanent Things than the rest of us—and indeed they may be—but in the world of American political thought, they are little more than curiosities.

JAMES NUECHTERLEIN is Editor of
FIRST THINGS.

The Church Militant

BAPTIST BATTLES: SOCIAL CHANGE AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION. By NANCY TATOM AMMERMAN. *Rutgers University Press.* 388 pp. \$37 cloth, \$14 paper.

Reviewed by William H. Willimon

WRITING ABOUT the bloody Battle of the Bulge in World War II, James Jones contends that the true heart of the battle was not in the major offensive during December and January of 1944-1945, but rather in the hundreds of "impromptu little battles at nameless bridges and unknown crossroads" that ultimately added up to a major German defeat.

I thought of that passage when reading Nancy Tatom Ammerman's voluminous account of the ecclesiastical war that has been raging in the Southern Baptist Church. *Baptist Battles* opens with the raucous and bitter Convention in Dallas in 1985 in which conservatives seized control. For the six years previous, a savvy fundamentalist coalition, led most visibly by Paige Patterson (President, Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas) and Paul Pressler (a Houston judge), had step-by-step been nurturing a Convention-wide organization, taking over local offices and boards. Confident, angry, resolute, the conservatives were at last ready to seize the Convention's national leadership, and seize it they did.

That event, which caught the eye of the whole nation, had been preceded by hundreds of preparatory skirmishes. It is the special virtue of Ammerman's book that she captures the flavor of those local encounters between Southern Baptist moderates and their angry, better organized, and ultimately victorious adversaries, the fundamentalists. While the book is the result

of an exhaustive sociological inquiry with the requisite reams of data, comparative statistical tables, questionnaire results, and quantification, *Baptist Battles* manages to capture some of the fire and brimstone of the battle itself. (I could not put the book down, and I am not even a Baptist.)

After a quick survey of the history

of the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention, we are given Ammerman's assessment of the theological composition of the Convention. By her definition, most Southern Baptists are "Conservatives." "Self-Identified Fundamentalists," while only composing about 11 percent of the membership, provided the leadership for

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WILLIAM H. WILLIMON is Dean of the Chapel and Professor of Christian Ministry in the Divinity School at Duke University.

the insurgency movement that took over the Convention. The "Moderates" only composed a total of about 17 percent of the Convention and quickly lost their historic control once their leadership was openly challenged.

FOR YEARS SHUT OUT of the Convention's leadership by the Moderates, Fundamentalists won by setting their sights on the Convention's infrastructure. By the time the Moderates woke up, the Fundamentalists had taken control of the Convention, placing their men (no women) in all the top leadership positions. Forsaking old-style, good-old-boy Southern Baptist conviviality, the Fundamentalists carefully organized themselves into disciplined cadres of like-minded "messengers" (delegates) who voted as they were told by their leaders. By 1979, Fundamentalists had captured the presidency and, from there, gradually replaced every important board in the denomination. By 1990, their takeover was fairly complete. Furman, Baylor, and Wake Forest universities had severed their ties with their state Baptist Conventions and most of the denomination's seminaries had either replaced most of their faculties and administrations or were busy doing so.

Sociologically, Ammerman's picture of the typical Moderate is a Southern Baptist from a white-collar setting, who attends a fairly large congregation, dwells in a city, and is better educated than his conservative counterparts. Fundamentalists tend to be less well-off, blue-collar, attend smaller-than-average churches, and remain in the rural Deep South. While Moderates show some diversity in their attitudes about matters like defense spending and women's rights, Fundamentalists are much more monolithic in their views.

Ammerman stops short of suggesting that Baptist theological differences are determined by a variance in social and economic classes, but in her telling such differences are noticeable. She pre-

fers, however, to characterize the differences between the Moderates and the Fundamentalists as being differences between people who make sense out of their lives in different ways.

At first glance, the main difference between the two warring groups seems to grow out of disagreements over interpretation of Scripture. However, while a fair amount of diversity emerges when Ammerman asks Southern Baptists to articulate their views on the specifics of biblical interpretation, it is mostly diversity within a thoroughly conservative biblical understanding.

Ammerman shows clearly that while biblical interpretation is important to those who fought this battle, a wide array of concerns united the Fundamentalist-Conservative usurpers against the Moderate-Conservatives. She says that much of the battle was fought over "the value and limits of diversity in an admittedly conservative denomination." That describes a wide range of conflicts about sexual mores, women's ordination, war and peace, and social change. The battle was also about power, the political power to control a massive denomination with vast resources. It is hard to escape the suspicion that some of the theological rationale was secondary to a plain struggle for power, recognition, and control.

For all its virtues, by the end of *Baptist Battles* one is still wondering if there is not much more to be said about the theological significance of what happened in the Southern Baptist Convention. Ammerman sets it up as a clash of left and right, liberal ("Moderate") and conservative, and that makes sense as the combatants' self-description of who they are. However, one questions whether there was not some flaw, some ticking time-bomb in Southern Baptist ecclesiology that merely took until the 1980s to explode.

THE FUNDAMENTALISTS deplore all things modern, yet their theology

is a ringing endorsement of the modern American nation-state. They find it suitable to defend Genesis through something they choose to call "scientific creationism." Do they actually honor the Bible as much as they claim?

As for the moderates, when they defend Baptist "soul liberty," it sounds suspiciously like a defense of conventional modern American individual autonomy and subjectivism. Have Southern Baptists at last reaped the bitter harvest of an ecclesiology that had inadequate notions of authority and insufficient liturgical and theological means for resisting the corrosive acids of the secular culture in which it found itself in late-twentieth-century North America? Finally, rather than speaking to the culture as biblical "Moderates" or "Fundamentalists," Southern Baptists in conflict resembled nothing so much as a mirror of the ideological split within American society in general.

These questions are not really those asked or answered by Ammerman. Fortunately, she gives us the data through which we can continue to pursue these issues in years to come. Students of the Southern Baptist Church will long continue to unpack the significance of what Ammerman has amassed for us, and any student of American Christianity must deal with her data and her interpretations. This is *the* book on Southern Baptists.

One of the most generous, gentle men I have known, a dear person who gave his life preaching in Southern Baptist churches and then teaching in one of their seminaries, died a couple of years ago. I heard that he had died of a blood disorder. A friend of mine, a Southern Baptist pastor, told me, "No, he died of a broken heart. He was utterly unprepared for the anger, the rage, the cruelty that he encountered in this war we're having among Baptists." Behind Ammerman's pages of data, accounts of maneuvering, endless floor fights, and late night strategy sessions is the sadness of a church with a broken heart.

Home Alone: The Plight of Children

WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS: THE COST OF NEGLECTING OUR CHILDREN. By SYLVIA ANN HEWLETT. *Basic Books*. 341 pp. \$22.95.

CHILDREN AT RISK: THE BATTLE FOR THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF OUR KIDS. By JAMES DOBSON AND GARY L. BAUER. *Word Publishing*. 291 pp. \$17.95.

CHILDHOOD'S FUTURE: LISTENING TO THE AMERICAN FAMILY. NEW HOPE FOR THE NEXT GENERATION. By RICHARD LOUV. *Houghton Mifflin*. 356 pp. \$21.95.

Reviewed by David Popenoe

THERE IS general agreement among Americans that the past few decades have witnessed serious negative

developments in the lives of our children, including psychological distress, poverty, and lowered educational attainment. In discussing these developments, recent new books on the deteriorating conditions of American childhood emphasize serious changes in family life—high divorce rates, less time spent by parents with their children, the lack of social support for parents, and the growth of single-parent families through vanishing fathers and unattached mothers. The American public shares this view, with a large majority now believing that the quality of childhood for most children has declined, and that this decline is mainly due to what has happened to the family. (One is tempted to say that only a few "family life experts" today believe otherwise, but even their number has been rapidly shrinking.)

These books, however, strongly disagree about how to remedy the condition. In this, too, they seem to share in American public opinion, which is spread along a continuum from left to right. Economist Sylvia Ann Hewlett, for instance, advocates a panoply of new child-oriented income-transfer programs like those found in the European welfare states. Noting with concern that a mere 4.8 percent of the federal budget goes to programs that support families with young children while 22.9 percent goes to the elderly, she proposes substantial increases in the amount of public

DAVID POPENOE is Professor of Sociology and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Rutgers University, New Brunswick. He is the author of *Disturbing the Nest: Family Change and Decline in Modern Societies*.

Rebuilding the Nest: A New Commitment to the American Family

Edited by David Blankenhorn, Steven Bayme, & Jean Bethke Elshtain

Rebuilding the Nest: A New Commitment to the American Family, just published by Family Service America, is a fresh look at how families are faring in today's society, the stresses they face, and the family values that need to be preserved, enhanced, and fortified if families are to maintain their function in society.

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money invested in young people. Those increases, according to Hewlett, need not require net long-term additions in government spending. Society will actually save money down the line, she argues, through decreased expenditures on such problems as crime and welfare.

At the opposite extreme from Hewlett are conservatives James Dobson and Gary L. Bauer, the heads of Focus on the Family and its research arm, The Family Research Council, respectively. In this collection of short articles and essays, Dobson and Bauer view ever-bigger government with its inevitable "social engineering" as itself part and parcel of the problem. Their solution for our difficulties involves turning back the insidious forces of "secular humanism," ending the "siege of unbridled individualism," and "return[ing] America to the Judeo-Christian values system with which we started." Among the forces held responsible for "the steady decline of Western Civilization" are abortion, homosexuality, premarital sex, and pornography, issues notably absent from the other two books, and guaranteed, of course, to raise the hackles of liberals just as welfare-state programs are to increase the ire of conservatives.

CAUGHT SOMEWHERE in the middle of this debate, downplaying both big-government programs and a radical change in values, is journalist Richard Louv. In this breezily written and somewhat meandering book, based on interviews with both families and family experts across the nation, Louv focuses on the local environment of childhood and finds it to be "unraveling." "The new landscape of childhood," he writes, "is increasingly threatening to emotional health." The solution: "transformed public schools, family-friendly work places, new community designs, new ways of structuring family time, a synthesis of traditional and modern family values." Louv is very fond of the recently fashionable term "liberation," and he gives it a

family twist, calling for a grass-roots "family liberation movement."

Here, then, are three distinct prescriptions for saving our nation's children: new government programs; a radical change in cultural values; and a grass-roots movement for local community rebuilding. To be sure, each of these solutions overlaps with others at some points. Hewlett would certainly like to see more family-oriented values, and she is by all means in agreement with Louv on the need for more family-friendly work places. Dobson and Bauer want a \$7,000 tax deduction for each dependent, which presumably would raise taxes for households without dependents; they also call for a radical transformation of the nation's school system using the voucher plan. In Louv's book, the desire for both more big-government programs and serious value change, while muted, is evident. Nevertheless, each book sharply frames one of the three major kinds of proposals for saving children circulating today, proposals over which ideologues have contended with notable intensity.

Ideology aside, which alternative solution seems most likely to bring about some decent remedy for the plight of the nation's children? Each, in my view, has much to recommend it; and given the magnitude and urgency of the problem, the time for ideological debating has run out and the time for a national mobilization comprised of all three approaches has arrived.

Of the three alternatives, government programs are probably the easiest to institute. The United States is considerably out of line with the northern European welfare states when it comes to national family-support programs. Yet the Europeans have been highly successful with such programs. The European family as an institution may have weakened as it has here, but the economic consequences of family decline have been much better attended to. And although the citizens of welfare states are in constant danger of becoming over-

dependent on their governments (as one wag put it, the welfare states established a safety net, but may instead have ended up with a hammock!), these nations are still doing relatively well economically and most are virtually free of serious poverty.

OF COURSE, there are major social, economic, and political differences between the European welfare states and the United States. We cannot emulate them, nor should we. Still, it is alarming that the United States does not have proper health care for all infants, that preschool education for many children is nonexistent, that parents cannot take time off from work at the birth of a child without suffering severe economic consequences, and that family households are rapidly falling behind non-family households in economic terms. One may well worry about over-dependency on government in a place like Sweden, but in America such problems pale in comparison with what the "free market" is *not* doing for our nation's children. Unless and until the market enthusiasts come up with a viable solution to these problems, and they certainly have not yet, this nation is well advised to take Sylvia Ann Hewlett to heart and shift more in the European direction with respect to certain health, education, and family-support programs.

Now consider the issue of value change. Is it really possible to turn back the clock—to become less individualistic, less materialistic, and less secular? There is no way literally to reconstitute the past, but social and cultural values can and do shift over time. Witness the value changes in recent decades with regard to civil rights, women's roles, and treatment of the environment. It is noteworthy that each of these shifts was successfully promoted by social movements designed to raise cultural consciousness of the need for change.

Over the past half-century our middle-class youth have changed, in popular parlance, from being

squares in the 1950s, to hippies in the 1960s and 1970s, to yuppies in the 1980s. Now there are signs that they are becoming more traditional and familistic again—i.e., square. Drug and alcohol use are down among young adults, for example, and marriage and babies are up. The time is ripe to actively promote this trend through movements of cultural change. I doubt, however, that Dobson and Bauer are putting forth the kind of message that will accelerate this change. Unfortunately, it is cast in such rigid terms, and with so much extra theological and moral baggage, that many of the young are likely to reject it. But these authors surely cannot be faulted for calling to our attention the paramount need for cultural change. It is hard to visualize a successful solution to our nation's family and community problems without some cultural diminution of individualism, and a corresponding accentuation of such other-oriented values as familism.

Even with massive government programs and substantial value change in place, however, there would remain the problem of everyday life in contemporary America. What Louv is calling for—the social rebuilding of our local communities and “civil society”—is in many ways the most fundamental and important of the solutions, just as it may be the most difficult to accomplish.

WHAT REGULARLY and inescapably confronts our daily consciousness, often causing us to behave one way rather than another, is the local environment that surrounds us. If it is safe and secure, nurturing and uplifting, we tend to feel good about ourselves and about our fellows and are willing responsibly to carry out our family and other social obligations and commitments. If it is crime-ridden, rejecting, and forbidding, we tend to feel anxious and alienated, to withdraw into our private lives, and to become excessively individualistic and narcissistic.

There can no longer be any doubt

that American civil society is rapidly deteriorating. But what to do about it remains a vexing question. How is one to halt crime, end poverty, de-materialize American daily life, restore neighborhood integrity, and rebuild confidence in our schools and local political institutions? A tall order indeed. Yet if we are to restore vitality to fam-

ilies and provide children the conditions that are essential for their full human development, answers to these questions are ultimately necessary.

Thus, rather than ideological debates, what is needed is a new national resolve and an all-fronts mobilization. For today's inner cities, perhaps only a domestic

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Marshall Plan will do the job. For the suburbs, we must vigorously fight the privatization of life and hammer away at the need for community integrity and greater social awareness. In both residential settings our goal should be to stabilize and protect "natural" communities wherever they are found, and seek to build them where they are absent. Natural, or functioning, communities are those that contain strong feelings of belonging and common purpose, and in which warm, personal, enduring social relationships are highly valued. They are communities that provide their residents both social support and cultural identity. This is the kind of local environment in which strong, child-oriented families flourish. And it is the kind of environment that is fast disappearing from the American scene.

Beyond Modernity

AFTER IDEOLOGY: RECOVERING THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION OF FREEDOM. By DAVID WALSH. *HarperSan Francisco*. 296 pp. \$29.95.

Reviewed by Quentin L. Quade

IN THIS BOOK, David Walsh uses Nietzsche to show how the modern Western world, after tearing itself loose from its Christian foundations, inevitably failed to maintain a defensible value structure. Mere derivatives of Christianity such as this world came to depend on as guides for human action could not serve as such, and Nietzsche best portrays the absurdity of the effort to make mankind its own God. The real result, says Walsh, is nihilism—the name of the abyss confronting contemporary man.

Thus, the way to avoid this abyss, or escape from it, is to reestablish the human connection to, and conformity with, the divine order. Acknowledgment that there is such an order, and openness to and acceptance of it, is the secret of the great

philosophers, Christian and pre-Christian. The Greeks, for example, though obviously without Christ's revelation, had realized that the truly good life consisted in a willingness to harmonize the self with the principles of right action, which, they judged, could be discerned by the honest and searching person. (In this sense, since the good was objective and ascertainable, it is appropriate and not surprising that the Greeks often pointed to the "good person" rather than a code as the right object of emulation.)

For Walsh, the idea both that there is a divinely rooted good order for man and that it is ascertainable is bedrock. From there, he proceeds to tell the stories of four men of the modern era who saw Nietzsche's abyss, descended into it, and then heroically ascended from the depths. The four—Dostoevsky, Solzhenitsyn, Camus, and Voegelin—take up the greater part of this book, as Walsh traces, first, their life in modernity, their unwillingness to accept the emptiness it confronted them with, their respective struggles to transcend it, and finally, their achievement of the true transcendence—in the end, the only genuine source of order and peace.

WALSH presents their stories as exemplary for modern man in general. He repeatedly emphasizes his belief that there is at least as much to learn from the struggles of the four as from their formal teachings. They grappled with the temptation to self-aggrandizement that nihilism offers and discovered for themselves the good that is not merely a set of abstract norms but, provided one opens oneself to it, a lived reality.

These are great themes for Walsh to explore, and great figures through whom to explore them; hence once finds oneself disappointed that for all its dramatic sweep and often insightful generalizations the book exhibits some fundamental confusions.

One is reminded by *After Ideology* of the marvelous old story

about the philosopher who escaped to the desert, there to contemplate reality and finally grasp its essence. After twenty years of solitude, he had finally achieved his objective. He came out of the desert and announced to the first person he encountered, "Life is a tree." To which his new-found acquaintance replied, "No, it isn't." Mr. Walsh clearly had a great desire that quite disparate realities be made symmetrical. In particular, he seemed to wish that his four exemplars could be more alike than they in fact are, and become thereby a kind of united force for intellectual and spiritual reform. He also comes dangerously close to declaring existential struggle to be the *sine qua non* of all insight: the struggle, in other words, is by itself more important than what it results in. And finally, he has a way of wiping away the distinction between what might be the path to *individual* perception and salvation and what might be required for the salvation of a whole civilization.

The most striking example of Walsh's drive to symmetry involves his persistent effort to baptize Camus a Christian despite the fact that Camus explicitly rejected Christian faith. Walsh overcomes this difficulty by asserting that "a further unfolding of [Camus' thought] would have arrived at a position virtually identical with Christianity," and that "Camus' experience became Christian in all but name." To claim to know how Camus would unfold seems a bit extreme for someone who praises existential freedom, and to say "in all but name" sounds odder still from an admirer of C. S. Lewis who, in *Mere Christianity*, went to great lengths to show that being Christian precisely *requires* the name.

A prime example of Walsh's tendency to elevate struggle over perception is to be found in his treatment of Jacques Maritain. Walsh assumes that before real understanding can be achieved, "a sojourn in the wilderness *must* take place" (emphasis added). Only after having thus sojourned could a

QUENTIN L. QUADE is Professor of Political Science at Marquette University.

Camus, for example, come to see that "human nature does exist, as the Greeks believed," whereas Maritain, by contrast, was limited by having *started* as a Christian. His natural-law teaching, though not in Maritain's view faith-dependent, "had its origin in Christianity." It is therefore not surprising, according to Walsh, that Maritain "evoked the image of a 'new Christianly inspired civilization' as the only viable alternative to the destruction of humanity wrought by the prevailing 'totalitarian spirit.'" Maritain, in short, is made to appear dependent on and limited by an assumed faith, in contrast to the book's four heroes who attain reality only through great struggle.

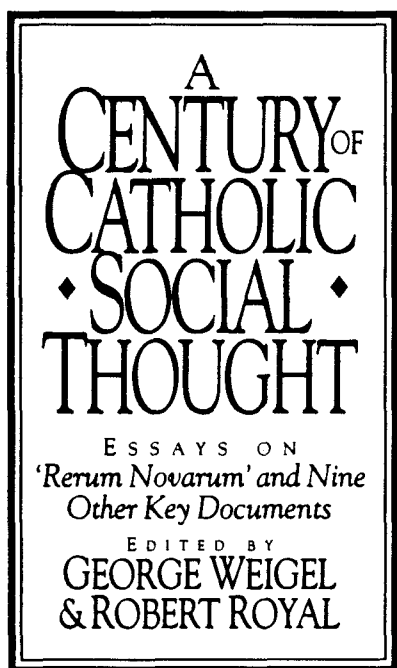
THE TRUTH is that Maritain's major treatment of natural law, in *Man and the State*, is entirely natural, not

revelatory. Indeed, there he traces natural law through the Greeks and Romans—and calls Antigone its "eternal heroine." And a later reference, in a different part of the book, to a "new Christianly inspired civilization" was in no sense a suggestion that he expected such or considered it a requirement for a more enlightened order. Walsh's insufficient understanding and appreciation of Maritain appears to stem from his underlying assumption that reflection without a fall and redemptive struggle cannot yield the truth.

AS FOR Walsh's previously noted tendency to shift without explanation from the personal to the civilizational, it leaves us with a question. The world must have a new "Christian foundation," he tells us, and "Christianity offers the best hope of

restoring personal, political, and historical order." What we are *not* told, however, is exactly what kind of conversion is involved in such an aspiration. Does this mean that there is to be a new spirit of the age, more or less independent of, but formative for, the persons who exist? Or does it mean that when and if enough souls move through their own conversions, we will have a soil in which a new order will flower? Furthermore, at times Walsh's entreaties for a new Christian order seem utilitarian and to run in reverse: Do you want to save the world? If so, see God and His Christ. I think for the Christian the more normal order of things would be: Do you want to know the truth? See God and His Christ. Then, save the world, at least the part you can touch, by the rules He gives you.

◆ MODERN CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT ◆



Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum* initiated a series of contributions by the Church to the ongoing public debate over the pursuit of peace, freedom, security, and prosperity. This volume offers comments on ten key documents of the Church's modern social doctrine by William Murphy, Thomas C. Kohler, Robert A. Sirico, George Weigel, Mary Eberstadt, Kenneth L. Grasso, Robert Royal, James Finn, Robert A. Destro, and William McGurn. Richard John Neuhaus contributed the foreword and Leonid Kishkovsky an afterword.

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Aristocrats at Bay

THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE BRITISH ARISTOCRACY. By DAVID CANNADINE. Yale University Press. 813 pp. \$39.95.

Reviewed by Alan Jacobs

AS MIGHT be expected of a book whose title echoes Gibbon's magnum opus, David Cannadine's history of the British aristocracy since 1875 is long, exhaustive, wide-ranging, and anecdotally rich. For a book of its size, and given the detail with which it traces the fortunes of its subjects in every sphere of life, it has remarkably few *longeurs*. Surely it will remain for many years the best, and not just the fullest, treatment of its topic.

Cannadine begins by arguing that, despite the great reforms of the 1830s, as the nineteenth century entered its final quarter the British nobility and landed gentry retained as much power and sway as they had ever had. They, to be sure, would not have agreed, believing for the most part that the reforms had left them mere shadows of their ancestors. Nevertheless, in 1880 they still dominated the political and economic life of their nation, and maintained that dominance largely by means of their land holdings. For instance, in England proper fewer than 5,000 men (they were almost all, of course, men) owned 56 percent of the land; in Scotland, a mere 1,758 owned 93 percent of the land.

But in the 1880s what was alleged to have happened half-a-century earlier did in fact take place: a series of profound reforms would undermine this dominance and, according to Cannadine's compelling story, would within a century transform this elegant and confident elite into, with few exceptions, an economically powerless, politically ineffectual, and even socially marginal group.

It was the Third Reform Bill of 1884 and 1885, according to Canna-

dine, which by drastically expanding the voting franchise, started the ball rolling. Soon there would be laws that would make landowning less profitable by increasing tenants' rights at the expense of landowners' prerogatives. Eventually the loss of profitability, coupled with a series of agricultural depressions, would force many aristocrats to sell off much (in some cases all) of their land—often to the businessmen and industrialists whom they had despised as their social inferiors. Those who were able to keep their land frequently did so by going into business themselves and in so doing risked being regarded as traitors to their class, though all they were in fact doing was coming to terms with a radically altered economy, one in which landowning was no longer the key.

PERHAPS EVEN more telling is Cannadine's account of the collapse of the House of Lords as a political force. It is sometimes said that the Lords showed weakness of will by voting away their own powers when they passed the Parliament Bill of 1911, but Cannadine shows that they were forced to accept defeat at the hands of an unlikely partnership: the Liberal Prime Minister Herbert Asquith (backed by his incendiary Chancellor of the Exchequer, David Lloyd George) and King George V himself. King George secretly agreed to create as many liberal peers as Asquith needed to get the bill passed; when this royal promise was revealed to them, the Lords, rather than accept what they felt would be a horrifying dilution of aristocratic society, grudgingly (and by a very narrow margin) passed the bill. From that point on, their powers would wane; never again would the peers be a significant force in British politics.

These events are related relatively early in Cannadine's story; the rest of the book explores in relentless detail the accelerating rate of aristocratic decline. Cannadine is certainly no supporter of the old regime; indeed, he can be passionate in his chronicle of its injustices. But one of his greater virtues (perhaps learned from the novelists whom he regularly

and effectively quotes) is his ability to portray—with wit, charity, and sympathy—individual members of the aristocratic class faced with the task of adjusting to a strange and often unfriendly world, one for which their background offered them no preparation. Some of the best parts of the book are devoted to such characters: the orientalist and aesthete Wilfred Scawen Blunt; the Mitford sisters (Nancy, Jessica, and Unity), with their widely divergent political views and consequent antagonisms; the Kenya settlers and their attempts to rebuild a patrician society in equatorial Africa. And there is something poignant in Cannadine's portrayal of aristocrats who have survived by exploiting their own belatedness, by spending the only coin they have, that of celebrity: they interest us as representatives of "a day gone by," a "lost way of life" that can be seen now only in the stately homes that they manage to keep by opening them to public scrutiny.

One of the more interesting aspects of the book is the treatment of the changing relationship between the aristocracy and the Church of England. Readers of nineteenth-century fiction—Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, say, or Trollope's Barsetshire novels—will remember the old system: the nobles and the landed gentry dispensing benefices according to their personal preferences, frequently overlooking honest and devout men in favor of sycophants, younger sons of other lords or gentlemen, or even members of their own family. According to Cannadine, in the late 1870s over half of the 13,000 clerical livings in the Anglican Church were in the hands of individuals; the Duke of Devonshire alone controlled thirty-eight parishes.

BUT IN THIS area as in others, expansion of the voting public eventually meant changes for the aristocracy. A series of laws—in 1898, 1923, and 1931—took much of the power of appointment away from the aristocracy and gave it instead to the bishops and, to a lesser extent, to parish councils. (We can assume that this

ALAN JACOBS teaches in the English Department at Wheaton College.

was often good news for the average churchgoer, but it certainly meant economic hard times for the clergy: clerical salaries remained very low throughout the first half of this century, so low that, according to Cannadine, many clergy couldn't even afford telephone service, much less an automobile.) As the church gained greater control over its clergy, it began to ask more of them spiritually and theologically than had their aristocratic patrons. For instance, the 1908 Lambeth Conference mandated a year of graduate training for all candidates for the priesthood. Eventually, argues Cannadine, the church produced a new generation of bishops who, unlike their predecessors, were neither patricians themselves nor indebted to patricians; instead, they were "members of a new, professional elite."

Nevertheless, the aristocracy remained influential in the Church of England for much longer than it did in other areas of public life. For many peers, such as the ecumenically-minded Anglo-Catholic Viscount Halifax in the late nineteenth century, or the long-prominent Cecil family, commitment to the church provided a way of fighting modernism in art, architecture, theology, and even politics—though the last of these they increasingly thought to be a lost cause. In fact, the energy that they devoted to the church, rather than to political life, indicates just how lost they thought the cause was. In Cannadine's words, "By the inter-war years, these men were no longer governing the state: they were governing the church instead."

Yet even here, Cannadine argues, they were ultimately ineffectual. Though devout aristocrats mustered the overwhelming support of the House of Lords in their attempt to block the disestablishment of the Welsh church (in 1914, three years after the Parliament Bill had lessened their powers), Lloyd George, now Prime Minister, and the Commons got it through anyway. And in 1927 and 1928, their great project, a revision of the Book of Common Prayer, was killed by the Commons—with unhappy consequences for the

Church of England until today, with Alternative Service Books and consequent liturgical incoherence.

CANNADINE CONTENTS that aristocratic churchmen lost their authority with the Anglican membership for the same reason that aristocrats as a class lost it with the nation: their beliefs and attitudes alienated them from the recently empowered lower classes. On the other hand, he tells us that by 1940 the Church "was no longer primarily rural and rich, but was now urban and poor." This suggests that the author might not be on totally secure ground here. He could mean to say that Anglicanism lost enough support in the countryside to make it only proportionately more "urban and poor," but even that is dubious. The cities of England have traditionally been strongholds of what used to be called Dissent (Baptists, Presbyterians, and, later on, Methodists), and in recent years Roman Catholicism has grown increasingly prominent in urban areas. In this climate it would be very surprising if Anglicanism did better in the cities than in the countryside.

In any event, Cannadine's assertions about the changing character of the church are only a part of the larger argument, which is that if the aristocrats had hoped to compensate for their loss of political prestige by controlling (or at least profoundly influencing) the Church of England, "they had nailed their colors to a sinking ship." There is no doubt that English church membership in this century would have declined in virtually any circumstances, but the causal chain might run both ways. Might not the decline of the Anglican Church be attributed in some measure to its traditional affiliation with the sinking ship of aristocracy? (Today, only a little over 2 percent of English people regularly attend Anglican services.) The church has long been aware that its difficulty in recruiting members from the working classes, and to a certain extent from the middle classes, results in part from the widespread perception that the national church is really a church of, by, and for the gentry and

nobility. There remains, then, at least the possibility, albeit a faint one, that the Church of England could slow, if not stop, its own decline and fall by distinguishing itself from the declining and falling aristocracy.

There is a recent precedent in English culture for just this sort of move: the Thatcher government's success in snatching the Conservative Party from the aristocracy and placing it firmly in the hands of self-made men and women of an entrepreneurial class exemplified not only by Thatcher herself but also, and more dramatically, by the new Prime Minister, the secondary-school dropout John Major. It was only this reorientation of the Conservative Party that made it palatable to an electorate which would have had nothing to do with the old Toryism. Likewise, it may well be that the Church of England's best chance for escaping the downward spiral of the aristocracy lies in the selection (by Margaret Thatcher herself) of George Carey, Bishop of Bath and Wells, as the new Archbishop of Canterbury. In many ways, Carey's working-class pedigree is even more impressive than Major's; and his status as a leader of the evangelical wing of the church is likely to make him more appealing to (again, what used to be called) the Dissenting interest. David Cannadine's fascinating history comes too late for the aristocracy to profit by it; but its message could provide an appropriately cautionary tale for the weakened, but not yet prostrate, Church of England.

BRIEFLY NOTED

DARWIN ON TRIAL. By PHILLIP E. JOHNSON. *Regnery Gateway*. 195 pp. \$19.95.

A calm, comprehensive, and utterly devastating critique of evolution elevated to the level of religious faith. Johnson of the University of California, Berkeley, brings a lawyer's keen mind to dissecting the arguments that sustain evolution as one of the more overweening orthodoxies in contemporary thought. Excerpts from the book appeared in these

pages ("Evolution as Dogma: The Establishment of Naturalism," October 1990).

DICTIONARY OF CHRISTIANITY IN AMERICA. Edited by DANIEL G. REID, ROBERT D. LINDER, BRUCE L. SHELLEY, and HARRY S. STOUT. *InterVarsity Press*. 1307 pp. \$44.95.

A truly splendid resource. Prepared under evangelical Protestant auspices and frequently reflecting that bias, this dictionary is thoroughly ecumenical and interreligious in its reach. Especially valuable for its bibliographies and biographical sketches of prominent figures, past and present. Clearly written and thoroughly accessible to the nonspecialist. Highly recommended.

NECESSARY ANGELS: TRADITION AND MODERNITY IN KAFKA, BENJAMIN, AND SCHOLEM. By ROBERT ALTER. *Harvard University Press*. 131 pp. \$19.95.

The word that seems almost unavoidable in describing Alter's work is elegant. It certainly applies to these essays on "the epiphanic force of memory" in the thought of Franz Kafka, Walter Benjamin, and Gershom Scholem. All claims to the contrary, modernity is not, according to Alter, immune to visitations by angels. Highly recommended reading for those who are open to illumination and enchantment.

EXPORTING DEMOCRACY: FULFILLING AMERICA'S DESTINY. By JOSHUA MURAVCHIK. *AEI Press*. 257 pp. \$24.

"When modern democracy was born on these shores in 1776, it encompassed a million or so citizens, one- or two-tenths of 1 percent of the world's population. Today 2 billion people live under democratic government, about 40 percent of mankind. America has been the engine of much of this transformation." Muravchik's provocatively titled and vigorously argued book proposes that the end of the Cold War should be a time

for revivifying America's sense of global responsibility for the democratic idea. He well knows and convincingly counters isolationist arguments to the contrary. *Exporting Democracy* must be read by those concerned about the moral case for America's role in "the new world order." The author overestimates American virtue, and more Niebuhr-ian ambiguity would be welcome, but he is surely on target regarding America's responsibility, if not its "destiny."

DIALOGUE WITH THE OTHER: THE INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE. By DAVID TRACY. *Eerdmans*. 123 pp. \$12.95 paper.

Tracy of the University of Chicago Divinity School writes in his usual very academic manner on a subject of importance. Unfortunately, he is inclined to assume an ability to enter into incommensurate religious traditions in a way that reflects the very hubris of Western culture that he deplors.

UNGODLY RAGE: THE HIDDEN FACE OF CATHOLIC FEMINISM. By DONNA STEICHEN. *Ignatius Press*. 420 pp. \$15.95 paper.

An informed and informative polemic written by a deeply committed Catholic mother and journalist. One cannot help but be impressed by her determination in spending hundreds of hours in feminist meetings and in interviews with prominent feminists. She ties raging feminism into what she views as the more general crisis of Catholicism in America, but ends on a note of hope for a "restoration" of sanity and, therefore, orthodoxy.

GOD AND CREATION: AN ECUMENICAL SYMPOSIUM. Edited by DAVID BURRELL and BERNARD MCGINN. *University of Notre Dame Press*. 352 pp. \$29.95.

Christian, Jewish, and Islamic scholars compare their understandings of the relationship between Creator and

creature. Of special interest is editor Burrell's "Creation or Emanation: Two Paradigms of Reason." Throughout, the essays are preoccupied with the perennial problems connected with the alliance and/or hostility between faith and reason, making some of the essays of broader philosophical interest.

PROBING CHINA'S SOUL. By JULIA CHING. *Harper & Row*. 269 pp. \$18.95.

A University of Toronto professor offers a compelling analysis of the struggle for human rights and democracy in China. A particular strength of this account is the attention paid religion, a factor generally ignored by the media. The author wants to end on a hopeful note but has no illusions about the gerontocracy that is, at the same time, devoted to and blind to its own interests.

THE PERENNIAL DICTIONARY OF WORLD RELIGIONS. Edited by KEITH CRIM. *Harper & Row*. 830 pp. \$19.95 paper.

With 161 contributors, some of the entries are bound to be uneven. But *The Perennial* is, all in all, a reliable and eminently useful resource for any general-interest library.

PRIESTHOOD: A RE-EXAMINATION OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC THEOLOGY OF THE PRESBYTERATE. By PATRICK J. DUNN. *Alba House*. 232 pp. \$12.95 paper.

In all the churches, the relationship between laity and clergy raises perennial problems. Dunn offers an accessible and informed survey of Catholic debates on ministry, contending for a "high" view of priesthood that is similar to directions in some Protestant communions. While the argument is generally persuasive, the suggestion that the shortage of priests may require the replacement of the eucharist as the normal weekly service is likely to meet with stiff

resistance. A useful appendix offers an overview of considerations that lead Rome to the conclusion that the church is not "authorized" to ordain women to the presbyterate.

LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE: ROGER WILLIAMS IN AMERICA. By EDWIN S. GAUSTAD. *Eerdmans*. 229 pp. \$14.95 paper.

An admirable popular biography by the emeritus professor of history at the University of California, Riverside. John Quincy Adams called Williams (1604-1683) "that polemical porcupine" and he did indeed make himself unpleasant in the course of establishing Rhode Island as a haven for religious dissent. Gaustad is especially good in treating Williams' ecclesiology, which led him to believe that the only possible true church was either Rome—and that was impossible since Rome was manifestly the Antichrist—or the church that would be established upon the return of Christ. For a long time Williams was very poorly treated in histories

sympathetic to the Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Company, while in this century he has been embraced by civil libertarians who ignore his religious and theological motivations. One sometimes gets the impression from such modern treatments that Williams was a premature member of the ACLU. In fact, his concern was to protect the "garden" of Christianity from the "wilderness" of the general society, underscoring the truth that religious freedom is itself a religious achievement.

REVOLUTION WITHIN THE REVOLUTION: THE FIRST AMENDMENT IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT, 1612-1789. By WILLIAM R. ESTER. *Eerdmans*. 214 pp. \$14.95 paper.

A church historian at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary makes the case for the separation of church and state from a Baptist perspective, and against some others, including the editor-in-chief of this journal, whom he suspects of misrepresenting the history of the First Amendment.

A sober and thoughtful argument. Foreword by Bill Moyers of PBS fame.

A RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF AMERICA. By EDWIN SCOTT GAUSTAD. *Harper & Row*. 391 pp. \$19.95 paper.

A new revised edition of what quickly and rightly became a standard account. In a steady and unspectacular way, Gaustad keeps religion center stage in the telling of the American story. A strong candidate for the library of anyone aspiring to literacy about what made America the way it is.

THE NATIVITY. By ARNOUL GREBAN. *Southern Illinois University Press*. 110 pp. \$24.95.

Now is the time to plan for the Christmas season. Greban's vast fifteenth-century play, *The Mystery of the Passion*, is here excerpted and gracefully translated by Shelley Se-wall. This is just the nativity section, and it would seem to be eminently producible by local churches.

The Fencer

The appearance of perfection:
Chiaroscuro come to an August day
Wafted by van Rijn.
Against the waving sky is the great tree
Icon for what, I do not wish to know.
Icon for what I do not wish to know.

What I cannot defeat I will to learn to meet,
Measure with level gaze on ordained ground;
Parry, attack and parry, sabers clanging
Along the warning lines.
This shadow fencer is unwearying
Nor will his blade aim for my side or arm:
It is heart's blood he seeks.

So be it. This is an honorable stain
And I may give in kind.
Five points in all—
A venerable number.
Right deep I bear these wounds into the sun
And lean against the tree.
And lean against the tree.

Myrna Reid Grant

Richard
John
Neuhaus

The Public Square

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

The Mother of Editorials: The *Times* Gets Religion

Maybe we have been too hard on the editorial page of the most influential of our parish newspapers. Over the years, the *New York Times*' editorial writers have been indifferent or hostile to the role of religion in our common life. Any impingement of religion on spheres that the *Times* deems "public" raises strident cries about violating "the separation of church and state." But now the *Times* has got religion.

Admittedly, it is a rather odd variety of religion. An editorial titled "The Ultimate Mother" begins this way: "Some of the people gathered on the Adirondack hillside called the woman a priestess, others a witch. She filled a bowl with water and pondered it for a few moments. Then she passed it to the person on her right, asking the group to concentrate on the water, putting into it prayers for their families, friends, community." The editors warmly approve.

They note that "goddess worship . . . is rooted in reverence for the ultimate mother, for woman as the giver of life." In societies that practiced goddess worship "life was peaceful, cooperative, and egalitarian, while in societies focused on the male gods it was violent, authoritarian, and stratified. In addition, the goddess-based cultures cherished earth as nurturer of humankind." We are told that "goddess worship resonates with modern environmentalism, and in particular with the Gaia Hypothesis—the theory, named for the earth goddess of the ancient Greeks, that the Earth and its biosphere behave like a single living organism." "Much goddess worship," the editors note approvingly, "centers on the classic elements—earth, water, wind, and fire—and recognizes spirits resident in animals and trees."

The editors admit that goddess worship has prompted ridicule from some quarters. "But if it appears flaky on the surface, it still warrants sympathy and respect. For it proceeds from values of

nurturing, peace, and harmony with nature—values as profoundly humane as motherhood itself." It is perhaps too much to hope that what is now the official religion of the *New York Times* will lead to editorial reconsideration of the meaning of motherhood, nurture, and harmony with respect to the unborn.

Observers have noted that under the rule of top editor Max Frankel the *Times* has become increasingly quirky. One never knows what spasm will next seize the gray matriarch of American journalism. Therefore, it is said, the editorials, while maintaining their accustomed tone of insufferable pretentiousness, can no longer be taken all that seriously. Perhaps so. It does seem worth remarking, however, when—in a society where 94 percent of the people say they believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the country's most prestigious paper editorially declares itself against the "male gods" and in favor of goddess worship. "The Ultimate Mother" should be kept in mind when reading the *Times*' frequent editorial frettings about how our nation's leaders are out of touch with the American people. The *Times*, needless to say, presumes to speak for the people.

FT

SEARCHING FOR THE VITAL CENTER

E. J. Dionne, Jr. is among the most intelligent and fundamentally decent journalists in the major leagues today. Formerly with the *New York Times*

and now with the *Washington Post*, he has written a book that has received, deservedly, wide attention. *Why Americans Hate Politics* (Simon and Schuster) is not for people who hate politics. It is an analysis of what has gone wrong over the last thirty years with our political culture. According to Dionne, the New Left that began in the 1960s entered a curious and inadvertent alliance with conservatism in devastating the liberalism represented by *The Vital Center*, published in 1949 by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. Dionne wants to reconstitute that vital center.

In its lurch leftward, says Dionne, liberalism alienated "the restive middle class" and turned most Americans off politics altogether. Conservatives, especially the neoconservatives who emerged as a force in the late 1970s, capitalized on this alienation by waging war against government and, implicitly, against politics itself. There are many pieces to Dionne's argument, and they do not always hang together, but his basic point is that the kind of liberalism he wants to espouse now has the chance to return our politics to a more elevated form of democratic discourse. The chance is there, he believes, because conservatism has reached an impasse. The libertarian and traditionalist streams of conservatism that William F. Buckley and the *National Review* succeeded in patching together for a long time are now breaking apart.

Dionne makes a great deal of the much-publicized clashes between paleoconservatives and neoconservatives. The traditionalist paleos declared open war on the neos over many questions, but the split became most evident in the reemergence of right-wing isolationism during the crisis in the Gulf. One suspects Dionne makes much too much of these little wars. There is columnist Pat Buchanan, but then it is hard to name even three or four other opinion makers with any kind of national constituency who fit the description of paleo-conservative. The notion that conservative ranks are deeply split and the conservative movement has come to a screeching halt is dearly cherished by those who, like E.J. Dionne, long for the reappearance of a liberalism with which they can identify without embarrassment.

All who esteem republican virtue and democratic discourse must share Dionne's desire for a politics that rises above the frequently nasty left/right polarizations of recent decades. He describes his book as "an inchoate demand . . . for an end to ideological confrontations that are largely irrelevant to the 1990s. It is a demand for steadiness, for social peace, for broad tolerance, for more egalitarian economic policies, for economic growth. It is the politics of the restive majority, the great American middle." Wishing, however, will not make it so.

Dionne has a remarkably benign view of the forces that are chiefly prosecuting the cultural wars that he deplors. For instance, this on feminist and

homosexual activists: "Feminists demanding equality for women were not selfish souls who put the children second; they were rational human beings responding to a world that had been vastly transformed, and to which they wished to make their own contribution. Gays demanding tolerance were not looking to insult the heterosexual world; they were simply asking that they not be picked on, ridiculed, and discriminated against." But surely Mr. Dionne is familiar with the declared purposes of NOW and ACT-UP, just for starters. There undoubtedly are feminists and gays of more moderate disposition, but it is folly to overlook the impact of movements that are utterly serious in their outspoken determination to effect cultural revolution. And it is passing strange that Dionne, whose chief political concern is for the Democratic Party, tends to downplay the degree to which that institution is in deep hock to the most extremist sectors of those movements.

Dionne recognizes the shadow cast over his wistful hope for a kinder and gentler politics by the question of abortion. "If any one issue is obstructing the formation of such a center, it is abortion." His solution? "The right-to-life movement needs to accept that its primary task is not political but moral." With stunning understatement, he observes, "Accepting that abortion will remain largely legal indefinitely is not a happy prospect for the right-to-life movement." Of course the prolife movement is not about to accept that. Suggesting that a political and cultural struggle be resolved by one side giving up its cause is not likely to prove very persuasive. To be sure, the prolife movement is about much more than politics, but in a democracy such as ours political struggle is itself a potent instrument in advancing the moral education for which Dionne rightly calls.

Every student of Aristotle, Locke, or Burke will readily second Dionne's call for a more elevated public discourse. Yet democracy is now and always has been a rough and raucous process. Like Dionne, we may well deplore the money and media nexus that dominates political campaigning while, unlike Dionne, we may also believe that very substantive questions about the common good were joined, for instance, in the 1988 contest between Bush and Dukakis. We may not like it, but our society is engaged in a *Kulturkampf*, a war over the values, symbols, and truths by which we ought to order our life together. Behaving in as civil a manner as we can muster, we will just have to see the conflict through.

One wonders if E. J. Dionne and many like him are valiantly resisting the recognition that they are neoconservatives. Almost all that he endorses—the critique of current liberalisms, the affirmation of family and republican virtue, the importance of mediating structures in redesigning social policies, the embrace of bourgeois values, the need to include

the marginalized in the mainstream of economic productivity, the leading role of America in international affairs, the critical significance of religion in public life—are planks, so to speak, in the neoconservative platform. Maybe someday the vital center for which Mr. Dionne yearns will once again be called liberalism. Maybe the insistence of Dionne and others that they really are liberals will help that to happen. Who knows? But for the present and foreseeable future that vital center is called neoconservatism. Labels aside, however, *Why Americans Hate Politics* is an engagingly wise analysis of what happens when political schemes are divorced from moral foundations.

 FT

DEBASING THE NATIONAL INTEREST

Dances With Wolves seemed to grab all the Academy Awards on offer. James Bowman, American correspondent of the London *Spectator*, says he is not surprised, and makes some connections with church pronouncements on the Gulf war in an essay titled “Of Bishops and Redskins.” Lieutenant John Dunbar, the hero of the film who goes native with the Sioux, is so very American. The film, says Bowman, “consists of a kind of *cultural* suicide—a deliberate choice of exclusion from the people to whom, by birth and breeding, Dunbar belongs.” So also, he contends, the Catholic bishops and oldline churches exhibited a deep alienation from the country of their birth and breeding. Bowman thinks he knows why the National Council of Churches declared the resort to military force to be “illogical.” The NCC was asking, in effect: “How can we oppose Iraq’s war-making on behalf of its national interest by making war on behalf of *our* national interest?” Bowman has a ready response. “The answer, of course, is a very simple one: because we are us and not them, because their national interest is not ours but theirs; and when the two come in conflict we are on the side not of theirs but of ours.” (Bowman is writing, not incidentally, in that provocative journal, *The National Interest*.)

Like the NCC, the Catholic bishops appealed to universal principles of justice that, according to Bowman, evade the obviousness of that simple answer. “The Catholic bishops who so generously offered their advice to President Bush on how to transcend his American perspective and make war like a god—punishing only the guilty and allowing even them every chance to redeem themselves—were

speaking, paradoxically, less as representatives of the church universal than as this kind of rather provincial American universalist.” It is in the nature of American particularism, Bowman contends, to aspire to the universal.

Bowman makes interesting points, but he is challenging much more than an American idiosyncrasy. No doubt there is in some sectors of religious leadership a deep alienation from this country and its role in the world, but the Jewish and Christian traditions are incorrigibly concerned about justice, and justice is inescapably conceived in universal terms. We say inescapably because these traditions profess one God who is Lord of all. To be faithful is to do His will as best His will can be discerned. Bowman and those of like mind would be more persuasive if they stopped polemicizing against universalism and explained, instead, why in the universal scheme of things calculations of national interest may be a more important component of justice than many religious leaders tend to allow. To reduce the case for the national interest to birth and breeding or blood and soil is to assure that national interest will continue to be excluded from otherwise morally serious considerations of justice.

Mr. Bowman may be right that *Dances With Wolves* is a celebration of cultural suicide. It is a bent toward suicide that is widespread in America at present. In the film, he observes, “the lonely frontier is beautiful and beautifully photographed; the Indians are all warm, funny, gentle, noble, and handsome people while the only representations of civilization, the white soldiers, are sneaky, vicious, illiterate, homicidal, ugly, and anti-intellectual.” The problem with the film, in that case, is not that Lieut. Dunbar chooses the Sioux over the community of his birth and breeding but that the film falsely portrays the alternatives. Likewise, the problem with the bishops is not that they refused to choose “us” against “them” in the war but that they failed to appreciate the ways in which our national interest may, in fact, also serve a universal good. If the moral argument for national interest is, as Bowman seems to suggest, no more than an appeal to tribalism, it is no moral argument at all. It is precisely in concern for the universal that national interests—ours and others—must be taken into moral account.

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MORE NO-FAULT PROPHECY

Bishop Herbert Chilstrom of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was a point man for mainline agitations against the U.S. response to

Saddam Hussein's aggression in Kuwait. For instance, on December 21, Chilstrom wrote a sharp rebuke to President Bush. "I believe you to be an honorable man, committed to peace. But I am equally convinced that unless you bend every effort to avoid war, including allowing much more time for sanctions to take effect, you will be responsible for leading the United States and the world into one of the darkest chapters of human history." Some months later, Pastor Russell Saltzmann, editor of *Forum Letter*, looks back and asks some searching questions. His complaint is not that Chilstrom took the "wrong" position on the Six Week War. He does note that Lutherans in Congress and elsewhere came down on both sides of that question, and he wonders why the bishop used his office to so vigorously support one side against the other.

Saltzmann observes: "This world abounds in political pundits, each of them all too eager to offer their various admonishments. Our church leadership should be very cautious of becoming just one more voice in a cacophany of competing claims. What this world does lack are people seriously willing to apply the Word of God—critically, spiritually, sensitively, and above all else, pastorally—to the specific situations where our people find themselves. We are too easily seduced by the inflated idea that our church officials are not only capable of exercising influence in the political world, but mandated to do it. This does not say we should never take political stands; rare exceptions always exist. But when we do, we should be very aware that ordination imparts no special abilities in the affairs of this world and the principle duties of the pastoral vocation that ordination does impart abide elsewhere."

Of course there is nothing uniquely Lutheran about this. Comparable reflections are warranted in almost all our churches where chattering ecclesiastics ventilate their partisan sentiments in no-fault prophecy, blithely walking away from a long string of falsified pronouncements, moving on to the next crisis that requires their "moral insight." One would think that a sense of embarrassment, if nothing else, would induce some pause for reflection and self-criticism. Alas, that is not the way it works with no-fault prophets. Their business is to call *others* to self-examination and repentance.

FT

DESPERATELY PASTORAL

On the Monument Hill of the late establishment Protestantism (a.k.a. Morningside Heights), three venerable institutions of what some think to be the

fading religious left rallied themselves to hold a conference following their "prophetic" debacles during the Six Week War in the Gulf. They are Union Theological Seminary, Riverside Church, and the National Council of Churches. The conference was titled "Bridging the Gulf: Between the Prophetic and the Pastoral," and was described as "a conference for clergy, laity, and seminarians on ministry in the aftermath of war." In large part, the prophets had gathered to lick their wounds and address the embarrassment of being leaders without followers.

Major participants included Richard Butler of *Christianity and Crisis*, a little magazine that trashes the Reinhold Niebuhr legacy that it claims, Joan Brown Campbell, General Secretary of the National Council, William Sloane Coffin, whom many will remember from radicalisms past, Larry Rasmussen, moralist and expert on why Dietrich Bonhoeffer got it all wrong, and the indefatigable Jim Wallis of *Sojourners*, who has become court theologian to liberal Protestantism in the ruins. All were outspoken opponents of the U.S. response to Iraq's aggression who carefully modulated their indictment of American policy. Sometimes that policy was murderous and genocidal, while in more temperate statements it was simply criminal madness.

Their assertions about the nature and costs of military action having been so massively falsified, they gathered at Union Seminary to try to figure out what went wrong. Workshop topics reflected the deep ambivalences that riddled the gathering. There was, for instance, "Patriotism and the Church—Glory Theology?" There was also, "Confronting the Church's Sense of Powerlessness." The power and the glory, not to mention the kingdom, of religious hegemony are courageously eschewed by those who confuse cultural marginality with bearing the cross. The assembled prophets concluded that the main thing that went wrong is that Christians in America paid them very little attention. The pastoral intuition that ordinary Christians might be possessed of good sense did not get much of a hearing. The Gulf only dramatized the still expanding gulf between a superannuated prophetic elite and the people who are the church in this society. We hasten to add that true prophets are frequently, even typically, rejected. The problem is with the conceit that being rejected makes one a prophet. The problem is compounded by putative prophets who so palpably want power and turn to being more "pastoral" in order to regain the influence that they have lost, thus debasing the prophetic and the pastoral alike.

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CLARIFIED BISHOPS

We are aware of at least two publishers who are planning books on the justice of the Gulf War. They are aiming for publication during the presidential election season and, although it may not be their explicit purpose, the effect will likely be to dim somewhat the glow of moral rectitude surrounding President Bush's policy. It will be recalled that the Catholic bishops played an important role in challenging that policy well before the American-led coalition responded militarily to Saddam Hussein's aggression.

Now Fr. Francis X. Winters of the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University goes back to take a close look at what the bishops said, and whether it holds up. Last November Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk, president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB), informed President Bush that there was "a significant consensus" among the bishops that resort to military force "would likely violate" several principles pertinent to a just war. There was, therefore, "a moral imperative" that sanctions be continued.

Fr. Winters, writing in *Commonweal*, alludes to the rather scant historical scholarship on the use of sanctions in cases of international conflict, and ends up a bit puzzled. "This evidence suggests that sanctions are a two-edged sword, capable of triggering aggression as well as reversing it. The moral and political ambiguity of the historical record of the resort to sanctions in the case of 'annexation' is a matter of historical record. What, then, was the intellectual and moral basis of Archbishop Pilarczyk's endorsement of sanctions as 'a moral imperative' in the present instance? His text did not elaborate."

Pilarczyk and other bishops also made the point that the use of military force could only be a "last resort" after all other means of settlement had been exhausted. Winters notes, however, that the principle of last resort has normally been understood to apply to the party that *initiates* war. He continues: "In this case, of course, that party was Iraq, which violated the territorial integrity of Kuwait on August 2, 1990. Once Kuwait was invaded by Saddam Hussein in violation of the criterion of last resort, just war theory accorded an *immediate* right of armed resistance to Kuwait and whatever allies it could speedily gather. To argue that, after being invaded, the wronged nation must negotiate with the aggressor for an unspecified period of time, while the aggressor pillages the conquered nation, is, some have argued, to stand the just war theory on its head."

Winters reports on an address by Archbishop John Roach, chairman of the bishops' International Policy Committee. Speaking more than a month after the coalition's military response, Roach respectfully

dissented from Pilarczyk's claim that there was in the NCCB a "significant consensus" against the justice of the war. "I do not believe," said Roach, "that our conference as a whole has a sufficiently clear consensus at this time to offer a decisive and united judgment on the overall moral justification of this war." "The bishops' conference," he added, "is a diverse body that functions best when we act with unity." Since they could not act with unity on this matter, Roach proposes that the question of the justice or injustice of the war reverts to what Winters calls "the court of first resort, the deliberation of the local bishop, speaking to the faithful of his own diocese."

There is much confusion in all our churches about when and how leaderships should speak to public issues. The Roman Catholic Church, of course, has a much more developed idea of episcopal authority in this connection than do most others. In the months leading up to, during, and after the Gulf War, the NCCB gave an uncertain sound that invited many Catholics to claim the church's support in their opposition to U.S. policy. Francis Winters' revisitation of how that happened offers some valuable lessons for the future—lessons not only for Catholic bishops.

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CAUTIOUS CAPITULATION

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) has adopted a statement titled "Criteria for the Evaluation of Inclusive Language Translations of Scriptural Texts Proposed for Liturgical Use." As such statements go, this one is relatively cautious. Yet there is no doubt that it represents an ideological endorsement of feminist claims that standard English is "exclusivist." It is, one fears, a triumph of "male sensitivity" intimidated by what a putatively increasing number of women "perceive to be" the case. The statement also raises questions about the role of preaching and teaching in the church. It says, for instance: "Translation should not expand upon the text, but the church recognizes that in certain circumstances a particular text may be expanded to reflect adequately the intended meaning of the pericope. In all cases, these adaptations must remain faithful to the intent of the original text." As numerous literary scholars have argued, the actual text and the "intent" are inseparable. Surely it is the task of preaching and teaching to elaborate upon the text, explaining its many possible "meanings." To change the text in order to eliminate what may offend some is to deny the people of God the

opportunity to wrestle with the scriptural word.

The statement ingenuously concludes that the use of "inclusive language . . . should not draw attention to itself." But of course it inescapably does draw attention to the victory of those who are given license to change what they do not like in the constituting texts of the Christian community. Some bishops congratulated themselves for resisting "more radical changes," failing to recognize that any change made on the ideological grounds set forth is radical indeed. And of course there is no evidence that the great majority of women in the church do "feel excluded" by the use of standard American English. Naturally, radical feminists claim that the problem is that those women have not had their "consciousness raised." Regrettably, the bishops have given new and unwarranted credibility to that claim.

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POLITICAL RELIGION: REPORTING ON THE REPORTERS

We now have the second volume of Martin E. Marty's *Modern American Religion* (University of Chicago Press). The first, covering the years 1893-1919, appeared five years ago and was titled *The Irony of It All*. The second, *The Noise of Conflict*, takes up the story from 1919 to 1941. The prolific University of Chicago writer has ploughed this field many times before, in *The Righteous Empire*, *Pilgrims in Their Own Land*, and related books. But his interest does not flag as he keeps turning up new anecdotes with which to lace the telling of the story once again. In the view of some, *Modern American Religion* will be Marty's magnum opus, the definitive recapitulation of his life-long reflection on the American religious situation.

A Journalist's Journalist

Marty's telling of the story is very political, very Protestant, and very liberal. It is also very journalistic. There are no doubt strengths and weaknesses attending each of these factors. Marty has been called a journalist's journalist, and it is not surprising that prominent reporters have hailed the present work as the "standard account" of American religion. It is, among other things, the account that journalists have proposed over the decades. As Marty puts it, he has "reported on their reports." Nowhere else is one likely to find such a useful compendium

of items on American religion retrieved from the now yellowed newspapers of the past. Retrieval is not all that we might want from an historian, but it is not unimportant. The basic story line adopted by Marty is determined by what appears on the front pages. Religion news is usually buried in the inside, "below the fold," as they say. It is the achievement of Marty to have exhumed for us the religion news, showing how it reflected, and sometimes influenced, what he simply calls "the nonreligious arena."

American journalism is very political, and Mr. Marty's construal of American religion follows suit. The usual textbook histories tend to shortchange religion, and Marty fills in the gaps. The story line remains unchallenged: 1919-1921 was about the "Red Scare" following World War I, then came the Ku Klux Klan, labor agitations, the Depression, presidential campaigns, and debates over preparations for another war. Marty chronicles how religion mirrored and impinged upon these developments in what some view as "the real world," which is to say the world of politics. He observes that the present work "does not aspire to be an original contribution to social history." "More nearly," he writes, "it is a form of political history in that its topic is power and influence in the *polis*, the human city, the republic, though its first preoccupation is not with political events. It is best described as an essay in *cultural* history." Yet more nearly, one might suggest, it is a compilation of cultural and religious developments refracted through the journalistic lens of politics. While this approach undoubtedly has its merits, it does produce the impression that religion is derivative or epiphenomenal.

"This," writes Marty, "is a story of *public* religion, of the various faiths as they vied to shape the nation, of the rhetoric of leaders and the kinds of actions their followers undertook." In other words, it is not the story of "Modern American Religion" but the story of religion's interaction with "the nonreligious arena." The constituting "stuff" of religion—such as worship, doctrine, morality, and ecclesiology—is, for the most part, worthy of note only when it makes an appearance on the political stage. Politics holds center stage. Thus, for example, Marty writes of Warren G. Harding that he "stood above" all the religious figures of the time "by the mere fact of his having held highest office." Thus, also, Marty discusses the public debate over immigration policy in the 1920s. "How did Americans interpret their action religiously?" he asks. He answers: "One turns instinctively to the White House, where the presidents as priests of public religion translated the symbols of national change." Mr. Marty's is emphatically a history of American religion "from above," not "from below." And "above" means the commanding heights of political power.

A Protestant Tale . . .

As Marty's is a very political account, it is also a very Protestant account. At the center of the chronicle are the "brand name" Protestant churches. "Others, like the Mormons and Christian Scientists, were definitely at the periphery. On the boundary between the center and the periphery in standard analyses were several very large groups: Roman Catholic, Southern Baptist, Missouri Synod Lutheran, and Jewish in particular." If religion itself is at the periphery in the "standard analyses," the various religious groupings are either at the center or periphery of the periphery. For Marty, there would seem to be no doubt that brand-name or mainline Protestantism is at the center of the religious periphery in the telling of the American story. Although, to be sure, at other points he says that he embraces a "pluralistic" understanding of America in which there is no center, only many centers.

Mr. Marty returns again and again to the question posed by French observer André Siegfried in the early part of the century: "Will America remain Protestant and Anglo-Saxon?" Marty suggests that the answer is yes. After the modernist-fundamentalist wars, however, that answer must be qualified. "With no single and immediate outside force to supplant Protestants and Anglo-Saxons in their national house," Marty writes, "the issue then became *which Protestants, which Anglo-Saxons* would win that house divided." He quotes a 1924 editorial in *Christian Century* (of which Marty is now an editor) arguing that two worlds had clashed in those wars, "the world of tradition and the world of modernism. One is scholastic, static, authoritarian, individualistic; the other is vital, dynamic, free, social." These are the "two religions" of American Protestantism.

At a later point, discussing the end of the Depression era, Marty mentions "post-Protestant America." But that appears to be a momentary deviation from his firmly Protestant tale. Toward the end of his account, Marty writes, "All the changes in Jewish, Catholic, and the rest of American religious life in the public order necessarily meant some adjustment in the still dominant Protestant order and approach." What happened within Protestantism "would have taken place whether or not there had been any non-Protestants around." The latter is a remarkable statement in view of what he has earlier acknowledged about the influence of other forces.

For example, while Mr. Marty relentlessly downplays the impact of militant secularism in the 1920s and 1930s, he recognizes that religious modernism was in large part motored by a desire for acceptance in terms of thoroughly secular criteria of respectability. In addition, among the "non-Protestants around" were the Catholics. Early on, Marty writes that "it was the Catholics who were most left out and who in response became the chief menace of

the mirrored self to original-stock American Protestantism." If the "mirrored self" of Protestantism depended upon the "menace" of Catholicism, it hardly seems that the story of Protestantism was so self-contained as Marty suggests. His account reflects, one suspects, the embedded self of a chronicler to whom those who are not mainline Protestants are fixedly "others." The story of American religion would be little different, we are told, had they not been around.

And a Liberal Tale

It perhaps follows that Marty's is also a very liberal account of American religion. In his vocabulary, modernists are "moderates" while fundamentalists are "zealots." In the Protestant wars, the bizarre and fanatical on the right are ranged against those who are portrayed as sometimes misguided idealists on the left. When it comes to his discussion of political extremism in the worlds of religion, there is a large and ready cast of players on the right. Then, eager to be "balanced" in his treatment of extremisms, Marty writes, "If the focus here has been not on mainstream conservatives but on the right with a capital R, . . . it is only fair to go in search of their counterparts who embodied the left with a capital L." Marty going "in search of" leftist extremism in mainline Protestantism puts one in mind of a fish swimming around in search of water.

In his search he does come up with Father Divine and a few admitted members of the Communist Party. But others, whom some might deem extreme leftists, turn out to be only, as it used to be said, liberals in a hurry. Marty readily recognizes the fatuity of certain brands of liberalism. There is, for instance, the Methodist bishop who declared in 1920 that there is no reason to listen to "the dismal croakings of the chronic pessimist," because this is "the best hour of the best day of the best week of the best month of the best year of the best decade of the best century that this world has ever seen." But the excesses of the more hard-core left tend to escape Mr. Marty. For instance, those in the liberal establishment who opposed Roosevelt's New Deal because it might "save capitalism" and preclude the needed revolution were, well, somewhat immoderate.

Marty's search for the extreme left does turn up Harry F. Ward of Union Seminary, New York. But then we read: "For all the stir [that Ward caused], he rejected Leninism and, while not a pacifist, he also did not advocate violent revolution or overt class warfare." A little later we are told, "Lenin, in Ward's most incredible stretching of things, was turned into an icon, a sort of religious figure." Of Stalin's 1939 pact with Hitler, Marty writes that "only hard-core members of the Communist Party could stomach that bond." Ward, although presumably not a member of the party, publicly defended the pact. The confused

account of Ward is an exception in this account. Others on the left who might ordinarily be described as extremists here turn out to be idealists a little ahead of their time. Marty's failure to find much extremism on the left is likely related to his own political perspective. He cites, for instance, Bertrand Russell's observation of 1927: "Russia and America will become world focal points for two conflicting and intolerant creeds." Of that grotesque formula of moral equivalence between flawed democracy and brutal totalitarianism, Marty says that it possessed "some prescience."

Conventional Accounts

Mr. Marty's manner of reporting on the reporters tends to determine both attention paid and interpretation offered. For instance, Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer's "Red Scare" of 1919, which lasted barely a year, is the centerpiece of a full chapter devoted to the dangers of the attacks launched by "100 Percent Americans." What he calls the "oft-told tale" of the 1925 Scopes trial is told once again, and told in the same manner that it has been oft-told before. One looks in vain for a hint of critical reflection, maybe even revisionism, such as that provided by Garry Wills in his account of the Scopes episode in his recent *Under God*. But Marty is not in the business of revising the standard account provided by the reporters. For him the Scopes trial was just a matter of "fundamentalists [who] desired the sanction of civil authority for their dogmas." Perhaps a popular history of this sort does not lend itself to the exercise of intellectual curiosity or imagination, but one wonders if Mr. Marty has not restrained himself unduly.

To be sure, Marty intends to offer some revisions, but they are all revisions of what he takes to be conservative stereotypes of a "mythic past." The myth is that there was once a secure Protestant consensus that shaped and guided American culture. In the "noise of conflict" that he chronicles, he does demonstrate that the past was hardly tranquil, if that needed to be demonstrated. He also traces the ways in which mainline liberalism outmaneuvered the fundamentalists (the forebears of today's evangelicals) in gaining cultural respectability and control of ecclesiastical machinery, while losing much of its constituency and religious energy.

Mr. Marty is somewhat less convincing when he repeatedly asserts that the mainline was surrendering its hegemony "gracefully." By his own account, and much more clearly by other accounts, the liberal establishment fought tooth and nail against the "enemy" of evangelical Protestantism and conservative Catholicism. That was the case with the churches connected to the old Federal Council of Churches and it unquestionably continues today with the National Council of Churches. But despite

the process of the sidelining of the mainline—a process to which Marty is not indifferent—the mainline remains, in his view, the center of the political periphery that is "modern American religion."

Against the idea of a "mythic past" that he attributes to those with whom he disagrees, Marty urges that today's noises of religious conflict are little more than more of the same. One may be permitted to wonder. Consider current agitations in the churches over abortion, radical feminism, divorce, homosexuality, and proposed redefinitions of the family. One is not constructing a mythic past in noting that, on all these questions, there was a secure Protestant (and Catholic and Jewish) consensus in 1941 and well beyond. Moreover, it is near inconceivable that the Federal Council of Churches would have declared—as the National Council of Churches recently did declare—that the history of America since 1492 must be condemned as one of conquest, exploitation, racism, sexism, and genocide. Contra Marty's insouciant accentuation of continuities, much has changed, and changed radically. Perhaps his promised third volume in this series will take that more adequately into account.

On the other hand, the "pluralism" of "multiple centers" that Marty affirms does, at other times, suggest that there has been a fundamental change. "Such a pluralism," he writes, "shows positive concern for a republic in which citizens aspire to some measure of common conversation and even a basic consensus, but sees this aspiration better fed on common stories and intentions than on privileging one religious complex, for example a Christian America or a 'Judeo-Christian society.'" The argument is that there may have been, in the putatively mythic past, some justification for speaking of this as a Christian or Judeo-Christian society, but no longer. The implication is that shared religious traditions now have little part in providing the common stories and intentions for "some measure of common conversation."

Minimizing Public Religion

As is the case in the present book, the truly common stories are presumably those to be found in "the nonreligious arena," in the public arena, in the political arena. Further, it does seem odd to talk about "privileging" the Jewish and Christian traditions in this society. According to the massive City University of New York study earlier this year, nearly 90 percent of the American people identify themselves religiously as Jews or Christians. (Only 7.5 percent claim no religion.) In a democracy, is taking public cognizance of the beliefs of 90 percent of the people appropriately described as "privileging one religious complex"?

As mentioned earlier, the first two volumes of

Marty's project are useful manuals, filling in the religion news that did not appear on the front pages of political history. But, in a way that seems strange for an historian of American religion, he appears to suggest that the contests and altercations within American religion really are not that important. The titles of the first two volumes—*The Irony of It All* and *The Noise of Conflict*—reflect an attitude of slightly amused disengagement. They are written from an authorial perspective that implies that it is above it all, and invites the reader to assume a similar posture. After all the noise of conflict, what difference did it make? The world goes on. The argument and tone of the second volume in particular suggest that it might better have been titled *Sound and Fury, Signifying Nothing*.

Marty repeatedly returns to the observation that, for all the violence of religious rhetoric, from 1919 to 1941 only four deaths resulted from religious conflict. This, the unsuspecting reader might conclude, is the real achievement and contribution of modern American religion, that it has so little disturbed the civil peace, that it has not seriously disrupted the real world of "the nonreligious arena." Americans, writes Marty, "paid respects to the power of religion to reach and express the deepest of human needs, the most profound sources of individual and social life." But, in his telling, religion has but slight significance as a source for sustaining and guiding the life of the republic. Religion is chiefly a passionate, fevered, turbulent, and slightly mad force that is to be carefully contained. Not to worry, however, the threat is not all that serious. In the twenty-two years recounted here, religion killed only four people.

The Noise of Conflict is, in sum, very political, very mainline Protestant, very liberal, and very upbeat in a disengaged sort of way. As a popular political history of mainline Protestantism, the first two volumes of Marty's project make a contribution. There is nothing wrong with writing the story of religion as refracted through politics and a very particular political perspective. Indeed it is a useful thing to have. One will have to look elsewhere, however, for a history of American religion in which American religion holds center stage. That said, we should not be surprised if journalists who share Mr. Marty's view of things, and who are the reporters on whose reports Mr. Marty reports, continue to acclaim his project as "the standard account."

FT

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ You may have seen the Gallup data indicating that 78 percent of Americans believe in heaven and 60 percent in hell (up from the previous 1952 highs of 72 percent and 58 percent). Some religion observers have made much of the point that only 4 percent of respondents think they are going to hell. This, these critics say, suggests the optimistic superficiality of popular religion in America. We would not deny the shallowness of much popular religion, but the criticism does not wash in this instance. Christian teaching is that sinners who accept salvation offered in Jesus Christ can trust that they're going to heaven. There would seem, therefore, to be no inconsistency between 60 percent believing in hell but only 4 percent thinking that that is their destination. We mention this only because the alleged inconsistency has become a staple among some religion commentators.

■ The problem of "religion and power in the public sphere" is the subject of a reflection by Joseph Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago. He suggests it is not sufficient for the church to limit itself to the "vertical relations" between man and God. The church must also attend to the culture, recognizing "the centrality of public culture in shaping morality." Although "dialogue and persuasion must be religion's first impulse in the public sector, we cannot automatically exclude the possibility that, at certain moments, religious groups may have to move into the power mode in order to preserve certain basic moral values in a society." He is sorry that Catholicism did not play much of a part in the abolition of slavery and activism for "basic political rights for women" in the early part of the century. He indicates that the Catholic Church made up for that, in part, by its active support for the labor movement in the 1930s and 1940s, and by its participation in the civil rights movement of later decades. The Cardinal has undoubtedly put his finger on a cluster of important questions, but one wonders what is meant by the church moving into "the power mode." That is to say, what influence do churches possibly have apart from "dialogue and persuasion"? Perhaps they can, on occasion, bring financial pressures to bear, but even their economic power is entirely dependent upon voluntary gifts resulting from the churches' persuasive force. The "power mode," on the other hand, depends upon the ability to bring legal, police, or military force to bear. Religious groups have, and should have, no access whatever to such force. Possibly the Cardinal is referring to voting power. But the exercise of voting power is totally dependent upon dialogue and persuasion. The suggestion that the Catholic Church or other religious groups have the option of resorting to "the power mode" is unfortunate. It is not easy to square it with Pope John Paul II's assertion in his recent encyclical

Redemptoris Missio: "The Church imposes nothing; she only proposes."

■ There they go again. The "Jesus Seminar" reaps a good deal of publicity every year or two with its votes on what is and what is not "authentic" in the gospel accounts. The group was organized in 1985 by Robert Funk, a former professor of New Testament, in order to combat fundamentalism. What it has succeeded in doing is discrediting a good deal of biblical scholarship. This year the seminar voted that only 20 percent of the sayings attributed to Jesus were really his. Father Raymond Brown, the distinguished Catholic expert on the New Testament, says Funk's methods are "totally incompatible" with good scholarship. Father Brown is a charitable fellow. Nonetheless, one may be reasonably sure that a school of journalists will again take the bait the next time the Jesus Seminar votes the Bible up or, much more likely, down.

■ In the March issue we commented on public television's pop psychologist, John Bradshaw, author of *The Inner Child* and other dangerous pap. Mrs. Claire Ducker of Austin, Texas, agrees with most of what was said, but then this: "These [followers of the Bradshaw cult] are not, for the most part, 'the masses exercising their discontent on an excess of leisure,' but deeply wounded individuals, who do make up a rather substantial and growing proportion of the population." She believes that the churches have failed to respond to their needs and thus "have abandoned perhaps a third to half of the population to the feel-good blandishments of John Bradshaw and his ilk." Also, Bishop Joseph A. Fiorenza of Galveston-Houston writes to set the record straight about Bradshaw having been a priest. He never was, although for a time he did study for the priesthood with the Basilian Fathers in Houston. If Bradshaw does think he was a priest, notes the bishop, "perhaps that is part of his inner child's desire that was never realized."

■ We have earlier drawn attention to the Durham Declaration, a fine statement by a group of United Methodists on the abortion dispute. William Willimon, dean of chapel at Duke University, has done a commentary on that declaration, and he makes a point that all our churches would do well to take to heart: "Stanley Hauerwas has noted that when the American Quakers began their debate over slavery, they chose to focus first upon their own members who held slaves. Quakers thus made slavery an intra-church dispute before they made it a larger social issue. They put their own house in order before they gave advice to the wider society. They took their own language and faith viewpoint with primary seriousness before they used the language and concerns of the wider society. Most mainline Protestant ethical thought has taken the opposite approach. The Durham Declaration is distinctive

because, as few other public statements by the church on the abortion issue, it shows a determination on the part of a group of Christians to use their own distinctively baptismal discourse. Utterly missing from this document is any reference to either 'prochoice' or 'prolife' language. The church has been all too willing to begin ethical discussions by letting public policy questions determine the scope and the purpose of discussion. The result has been that rarely has the church had anything distinctive to offer public discussion. What we offer is nothing more than a secular solution with Christian veneer. It is clear that the Durham Declaration intends for United Methodists to think about abortion, not first as the society's problem but as *our* problem. It is clear, throughout the document, that here is a church talking about an ethical issue as a church issue. The document charges that United Methodists have not discussed abortion rightly because we feared division. We reduced 'the abortion problem to private choice and to just another issue for partisan politics.' The result was a selective application of detached truths from Scripture, rather than a comprehensive and distinctive approach to abortion which arises out of our unique, communal affirmation of the gospel."

■ The board of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Commission for Church in Society has approved "Abortion: A Proposed Social Statement." The statement, which must be approved by the church's general assembly, says it wants to avoid both "extremes" in the abortion debate. There are "sound reasons" for abortion when there is a clear threat to the life of the woman, when there are "extreme abnormalities of the fetus which will result in severe suffering and early death," and when "the pregnancy occurs when both parties do not participate willingly in sexual intercourse," especially in cases of rape and incest. The statement says, "The position of this church is that government has a legitimate role in regulating abortion." "This church," it continues, "opposes the total lack of regulation of abortion [and] legislation which would outlaw abortion in all circumstances." While the ELCA statement may be theologically and morally incoherent, prolife proponents who take an incremental approach to protecting the unborn have reason to be encouraged. If adopted, the statement would seem to take this five million-plus church body out of the camp that is desperately trying to sustain support for the 1973 abortion decision, *Roe v. Wade*. The ELCA statement is unmistakably one of political compromise, but a measure of moral reflectiveness is remarkable in light of the fact that the committee was heavily stacked in favor of the "right" to abortion. Prolifers in the ELCA are opposing the statement, as they no doubt should. That body could and should do much better in terms of a coherent ethic of responsibility to the vulnerable. If the statement is approved, however, we do well to

remember that many expected the ELCA, like most other oldline bodies, to do much worse.

■ We remarked a while back on Gallup's finding that Easter doesn't rank very high with Americans when it comes to "favorite holidays," and we proposed a few reasons why that might be the case. Richard Doerflinger of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops comes up with another and, now that he mentions it, it should have been obvious. "If people think of a 'holiday' as time off from the usual workday," writes Doerflinger, "Easter is a 'weekend' rather than a 'holiday.' If they think of a holiday as a 'holyday' (as in 'holyday of obligation'), most Catholics will not think of Easter because church attendance would be obligatory in any event." But of course. Doerflinger adds the thought that, if people were asked which are the most important "feast days" in the Christian calendar, Easter would no doubt come off much better. What does all this have to do with religion and public life? Don't ask.

■ We regularly mention opinion polls and other survey research data on the state of religion. And some readers just as regularly tell us that we should be skeptical about such data. But we *know* that. Here is an item that will undoubtedly reinforce the skepticism of the skeptics. A recent poll of 1,100 people in Great Britain found that 85 percent say that they are Christian and 12 percent say they have no religion. Then the bad news. Thirty-four percent of respondents did not know what happened on the first Easter Sunday, 39 percent did not know what happened on Good Friday, and 50 percent were unable to say outside which city Jesus was crucified. As he was being enthroned, Dr. George Carey might have had reason to ponder the finding that only 12 percent were able to name him as the new Archbishop of Canterbury. Re-evangelization, anyone?

■ A friend who keeps an eye on the Cambridge Divines sends us the bulletin from the chapel of Harvard Divinity School. There is this: "*It's a Baby!*

Kevin Cranston, Visiting Lecturer on Ministry, and his lover, John Enos, proudly announce the birth of their daughter, Amber Enos Cranston. Baby and Mom are great." And there is this: "Poetry As Prophecy: A literary analysis of religious text. A lecture by Dr. Suheil Bushrui, Kahlil Gibran Professor in Values and Peace at the Center for International Development and Conflict Management at the University of Maryland." Then there is this: "'He Speaks for the Trees.' Lou Gold, a modern-day Lorax, will speak for the trees of Oregon's Siskiyou National Forest on Monday, 7:00 p.m. in Sever Hall." Still more: "*Days of Deepening*. The HDS Chaplain's Office is sponsoring two one-day retreats where participants will consider the question, 'In the midst of studies and work, where is God/Justice/Life inviting you?'" Or you might want to sign up for this eight-week class: "*Belly Dancing and Women's Spirituality*. Learn to use muscles you never knew you had, wear exotic costumes, and enjoy moving all parts of your body to sensual Middle Eastern rhythms." Lest you think HDS has abandoned its constituting mission, there was also this on Good Friday: "Remembrance of the Death of Jesus (to 3 p.m.)." For some reason our friend refers to the Cambridge Divines as the Teenage Mutant Ninja Theologians, which doesn't seem very nice of him.

Sources: Editorial on goddess worship in the *New York Times*, May 12, 1991. James Bowman on the churches' foreign policy in *The National Interest*, Spring 1991. Pastor Russell Saltzmann on no-fault prophecy in *Forum Letter*, April 25, 1991. Father Winters on the NCCB, *Commonweal*, April 5, 1991. NCCB statement on inclusive language in *Origins*, November 29, 1990. Cardinal Bernardin address in *Origins*, December 6, 1990. Father Brown on the Jesus Seminar in *National and International Religion Report*, Vol. 5, No. 6. Will Willimon on the Durham Declaration in *Christian Century*, February 27, 1991. Religious data on Britain cited in the *National Christian Reporter*, April 12, 1991.

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